Class 287.1 Book Sm57

General Theological Seminary Library

CHELSEA SQUARE, NEW YORK

BENJAMIN I. HAIGHT LIBRARY FUND

HISTORY

OF

WESLEYAN METHODISM.

VOL. I.

WESLEY AND HIS TIMES.

BY GEORGE SMITH, LL.D., F.A.S.,

MEMBER OF THE ROYAL ASIATIC SOCIETY,
OF THE ROYAL SOCIETY OF LITERATURE, ETC., ETC.

FOURTH EDITION.

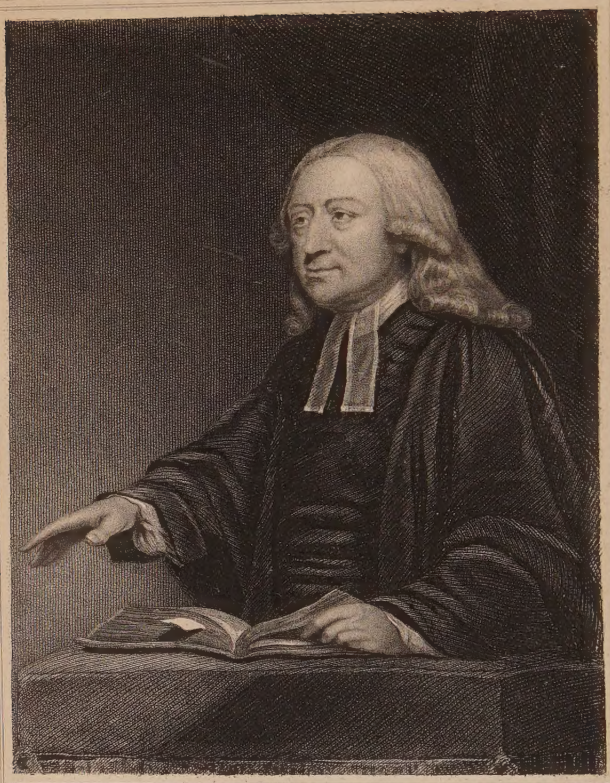
LONDON:
LONGMAN, GREEN, LONGMAN, AND ROBERTS:
SOLD ALSO AT 66, PATERNOSTER ROW.
1864.

287.1
Sm57
v.1

66662

LONDON:
PRINTED BY WILLIAM NICHOLS,
46, HOXTON SQUARE.

UNION THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY
LIBRARY
NEW YORK



Painted by J. Jackson, Esq. R.A. Engraved by I.

REVD JOHN WESLEY, A.M.

Published by J. Mason, 14, City Road, & Sold at 66, Paternoster Row.

TO

THE REVEREND ROBERT YOUNG,

PRESIDENT OF THE WESLEYAN CONFERENCE, 1856–7,

THIS FIRST VOLUME OF

THE HISTORY OF WESLEYAN METHODISM

IS MOST RESPECTFULLY AND AFFECTIONATELY

Inscribed,

AS A PUBLIC ACKNOWLEDGMENT

OF THE VALUE PLACED ON HIS FRIENDSHIP,

AND OF HIS DEVOTEDNESS TO THE

GREAT CONNEXION

OVER WHICH HE SO ABLY AND HONOURABLY PRESIDES,

BY

THE AUTHOR.

May 4th, 1857.

PREFACE.

Wesleyan Methodism has for a long time been a great and influential religious institution. Its evangelizing and conserving Christian agency, at home and abroad, has been so great, that no person can have any tolerable acquaintance with the moral and religious history of the age, and remain ignorant of the results of the life and labours of John Wesley. And as Wesleyan Methodism has not only extended itself over a large portion of the world, but has especially affected the general opinions and religious state of the Anglo-Saxon race in both Hemispheres, its history is necessary alike to the Philanthropist, the Philosopher, and the Statesman.

The reader may reasonably inquire why such a History was not given to the world long ago; and why it is now attempted. To the first of these inquiries the author does not feel called upon to furnish a reply, further than to suggest, that the absence of any previous attempt to supply so obvious a want may be taken as a proof of the opinion, that such a work must involve great labour and responsibility.

With this judgment the author fully coincides, and therefore feels bound to give an honest and candid reason for the appearance of the present volume. Not one of those who have spoken to him of the difficulties of such an effort, has a keener sense of their magnitude than he himself feels. If then it is asked why he has voluntarily undertaken the onerous task, his answer is,

that he fully believes a History of Methodism to be necessary; that he was invited and urged to undertake it by persons for whose opinions he entertains the highest respect; and, lastly, that he was promised such liberal aid in documents and other materials, and such friendly counsel from some of the best informed persons in the Connexion, that he was led to conclude, that such a work as he would be enabled to issue, was likely to be made a blessing to the Church and the world, although it might fall very far short of his aim and the requirements of the subject. On this judgment he has acted; and, in doing so, has exerted himself to supply a brief, but full,—a friendly, but faithful,—exhibition of Wesley's life and character, and of the great work which he was the instrument of initiating and carrying on in the world.

The author could say much of the difficulties which he has had to encounter, and of the reasons which have directed his course in several parts of the present volume; but he will confine himself to a few and brief observations. In speaking of the conduct and opinions of Wesley, he has felt the force of the remark of an eminent living author, who says, "It must always be an invidious task to stand toward a far wiser and better man than one's self in a relation which is likely, at every moment, to be mistaken either for that of a critic, or that of a commentator." In this delicate position the author has not been prevented from making a close and careful scrutiny into the life, labours, and character of that great man; or from giving what he believes to be an honest and candid representation of the whole.

The author has freely availed himself of the labours of preceding writers, and has generally mentioned the

source from whence he has derived his information. If this has not always been done, it has not been from any wish to omit due acknowledgment, but from a desire to avoid encumbering his pages with a multitude of references.

It is much more difficult to make a suitable acknowledgment to the numerous ministers and gentlemen who have favoured the author with documents, scarce works, and other valuable materials for this history; and also to these and to others for most important information and counsel: but he cannot refrain from publicly expressing his obligations to the Rev. Robert Young, President of the Conference, the Revs. Thomas Jackson, E. Hoole, D.D., W. W. Stamp, J. Entwisle, G. Osborn, W. L. Thornton, M.A., J. Hargreaves, S. R. Hall, J. H. James, J. P. Lockwood, G. Blencowe, J. I. Dredge, J. Kirk, and J. H. Rigg; as well as to Joseph Carne, Esq., F.R.S., Penzance, and James Nichols, Esq., Hoxton Square; from all of whom he has received most essential aid.

In making this avowal, however, it is not intended to implicate any person in the responsibility of the present undertaking. The author has fully availed himself of all the aids within his reach; but, having done so, he has in every case steadily followed the dictates of his own judgment. The work is therefore his own; and, as such, it is with unaffected diffidence submitted to the religious public, in the earnest hope that it may, by the divine blessing, be rendered instrumental in forwarding the cause of truth and righteousness. It is only necessary to add, that the simple object of the writer has been to present a faithful account of Wesleyan Methodism, avoiding the disparagement of any person

or party. If, therefore, any statement is found in the volume capable of another construction, he trusts it will be attributed to its true cause,—accidental oversight,—and not to any studied design.

Materials for a second volume, bringing down the history to 1815, have been collected; and, if the author's life and health are preserved, its publication may be expected in the early part of the ensuing year.

TREVU, CAMBORNE,
May 4th, 1857.

PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION.

The kind manner in which this volume was received, both in this country and in America, and the demand for a Second Edition within little more than twelve months after its publication, have induced the author to respond to the call in a way which he hopes will be appreciated by the Methodist Connexion and the public at large.

The whole volume has been very carefully revised. Some inaccuracies have been detected and removed; considerable improvement has been introduced into its arrangement; and the communications of several intelligent correspondents have added greatly to the amount and importance of the information which it contains. The author regrets that the extent of this revision has delayed the appearance of this second impression; but he was determined to submit to the inconvenience, and to use every means in his power to furnish as readable, complete, and accurate an account as possible of the Methodism of Wesley and his Times.

This revision has necessarily delayed the preparation of the third and concluding portion of the History. Considerable materials have, however, been collected for that volume, and it is hoped that it will be ready for publication in the course of the ensuing year.

Trevu, Camborne,
March 5th, 1859.

CONTENTS.

BOOK I.

THE RELIGIOUS CONDITION OF ENGLAND, AND THE FAMILY OF THE WESLEYS, BEFORE THE INTRODUCTION OF METHODISM.

CHAPTER I.

	PAGE
This investigation necessary: its nature and extent	1
The state of the nation under the Tudors	2
Origin and increase of the Puritans	6
The Stuarts, and their measures respecting religion	7
Injudicious policy of the king and Laud	9
Expulsion of the bishops and re-modelling of the Church	13
Episcopacy suspended, and Presbyterian polity introduced: success of the Parliament through the aid of the Scots	14
Usurpation of the House of Commons	16
Absolute power of Cromwell	18
Hasty and unwise manner of the Restoration	20
Object of Charles in this persecuting policy	23
Accession of James II. His religious designs	26
Rebellion of Monmouth. Cruelties of Jeffreys	27
Abdication of James	29
The policy of William and Mary	30
Nature and result of the prevalent religious influences	31
Origin and progress of the English sermon	32
Season of general prosperity	36
Progress in literature, science, and art	37
Causes of ministerial inefficiency	38
Testimonies to the irreligion of the times	41

CHAPTER II.

Origin of the Westley family	50
Bartholomew Westley. His conduct perils the safety of Charles II.	51

PAGE
Ejected from Catherston and Charmouth - - 55
John Westley educated at Oxford - - - 59
At Melcombe and Radipole - - - - 60
Minister of Winterborne Whitchurch - - - 61
Is persecuted at the Restoration - - - 62
He refuses to comply with the Act of Uniformity - 63
The victim of incessant persecution - - - 64
His death - - - - - - 65
Matthew Westley a surgeon: Samuel Westley: his education: leaves the Dissenters, goes to Oxford, and joins the Church - - - - - - 66
The family name - - - - - 67
Samuel Wesley's ordination and early ministerial career 68
Noble resistance of court influence - - - 69
The Athenian Society - - - - - 70
Presented to the living of South Ormsby - - 71
Removes to Epworth: Dr. Annesley - - - 72
Mrs. Susanna Wesley - - - - 74
Mr. Samuel Wesley as a pastor - - - - 76
His High Church and State principles - - 77
Injudicious conduct - - - - - 78
Severely punished and cruelly persecuted: his immense literary labours - - - - - 79
Missionary plans - - - - - 81
Strange noises in the parsonage-house at Epworth: Dr. Priestley's account of them: Dr. Southey's reply to Priestley - - - - - 82
Samuel Wesley, Junior - - - - - 85

CHAPTER III.

Birth of John Wesley - - - - 87
His imminent danger from fire - - - - 88
John and Charles instructed by their mother - - 95
John at the Charterhouse - - - - 96
Charles at Westminster School - - - 97
Garret Wesley offers to adopt Charles - - - 98
John Wesley at Oxford. Advice of his parents as to his future course - - - - - - 100
John Fellow of Lincoln - - - - - 102
John Wesley curate at Epworth - - - 104
Charles Wesley and his devout associates called "Methodists" - - - - - 105
John Wesley returns to Oxford - - - - 106
Active exertions of the Oxford Methodists - - 107
John Wesley's spiritual state - - - - 108

PAGE

He is earnestly urged by his father to reside permanently at Epworth. He refuses - - - 110
John and Charles Wesley consent to go as missionaries to Georgia - - - - - - 112
The origin and object of the colony - - - 113
The motives and design of the Wesleys in this enterprise 115
John Wesley's deference to his mother in this case. The brothers proceed on their voyage - - - 118
Their employment at sea - - - - 119
Pious confidence of the Germans - - - 120
John Wesley finds it impossible to preach to the Indians 121
John and Charles Wesley minister to the colonists unsuccessfully - - - - - 122
Causes of their failure - - - - - 123
Their return to England - - - - 127

CHAPTER IV.

Wesley's conversion: importance of the subject - - 129
Wesley meets with Peter Böhler - - - 130
Is fully convinced of his own spiritual destitution - 132
These views and feelings of Wesley contrary to prevailing systems of belief - - - - 133
Yet quite consistent with Scripture and reason - - 135
He obtains a clear sense of pardoning mercy - - 136
His religious experience vindicated - - - 137
The conversion of Charles Wesley - - - 138
Wesley visits the Moravian settlements in Germany - 142
Origin of the Moravian Church - - - 143
Noble struggle of Bohemia against Papal tyranny - 144
Count Zinzendorf promotes a Moravian establishment on his estate in Saxony - - - - - 146
Wesley visits Herrnhut. Is instructed by the Christian knowledge of the people - - - - 147
Returns to England - - - - 149

BOOK II.

WESLEYAN METHODISM FROM THE CONVERSION OF JOHN WESLEY TO HIS DEATH.

CHAPTER I.

John Wesley's preaching on his return to England - 151
The origin and character of the religious Societies then existing - - - - - - 152

PAGE
Whitefield's return to England. The obvious tendency of Wesley's course - - - - - - 154
The High Church views of Wesley and his brother - 155
Charles Wesley curate of Islington - - - 156
Wesley excluded from the churches - - - 158
Charles Wesley driven from Islington - - - 159
Whitefield in Bristol. Expelled from the churches, he preaches in the fields - - - - 160
Wesley begins to preach in the fields. Charles follows his example - - - - - - 162
His embarrassing position and prompt decision - 163
First chapel built. Wesley's reasons for his course of action - - - - - - 165
He separates from the Moravians - - - 167
Makes the Foundery his London chapel - - - 169
The Wesleyan Methodist Society henceforth a separate religious body - - - - - 171
The fruit of Wesley's preaching requires spiritual oversight and culture - - - - - 172
This denied by the clergy; partially supplied by lay assistants - - - - - - 173
Wesley separated from Whitefield - - - 175
Charles Wesley inclined towards the Moravians - 178
Wesley the subject of peculiar difficulties and trials - 180
Providential origin of lay preaching in connexion with Wesley - - - - - - 181
Similar appointment of class-meetings - - - 188
Methodist organization - - - - 189
Labours of Wesley and others in 1738 - - - 190
The progress of Methodism in 1739 - - - 191
Methodist labours and progress, 1740 - - - 192
Continued evangelical efforts and success, 1741 - 193
Methodist progress, 1742 - - - - 195
Methodist labour, persecution, and progress, 1743 - 196
Origin of Methodism in Leeds - - - - 198
Fearful riots at Wednesbury and Sheffield - - 200
Charles Wesley's first visit to Cornwall - - - 202
Wesley's privations and sufferings in Cornwall - 204
State of Methodism, June, 1744 - - - 208

CHAPTER II.

The first Conference, 1744; its constitution, character, and design - - - - - - 210
Earliest Methodist organization, and employment of lay assistants - - - - - - - 212

PAGE
Important results of this Conference - - - 215
Labours and journeys of the Wesleys - - - 216
Release of John Nelson. Francis Scott, of Wakefield, and William Shent, of Leeds - - - 219
The second Conference, 1745. Origin and progress of Church government - - - - 223
The third Conference, 1746. Mode of examining lay preachers. First list of Circuits - - 228
Charles Wesley's journeys - - - - 232
Wesley's incessant labours - - - - 233
Conference of 1747. Outline of the conversations - 234
Travels and labours of the Wesleys. Conversion of Grimshaw - - - - - - 237
His co-operation with Wesley - - - - 240
A Methodist Society in Manchester - - - 241
The fifth Conference, 1748. List of Circuits. Kingswood School - - - - - - 242
Rev. George White, of Colne. Society meeting at Todmorden - - - - - - 246
Conference of 1749. Appointment of assistants; their duties - - - - - - 248
Quarterly-Meetings at this time in Yorkshire - 251
The seventh Conference, 1750. Violent persecution in Ireland - - - - - - 252
Thomas Walsh begins to preach - - - 253
The eighth Conference, 1751. Methodism in Scotland. Labours of John Bennett - - - - 254
First Quarterly-Meeting in Cheshire - - - 257
Conference of 1752: improved arrangements for support of preachers - - - - - - 258
Conference of 1753. Minutes. Circuits - - 260
Singular case of mental affliction - - - 263
Conference of 1754. Secession of Jonathan Reeves and other preachers - - - - 267
The twelfth Conference, 1755 - - - - 269
The Minutes of this Conference - - - 270
The renewal of the covenant introduced - - - 271
Conference of 1756. Its proceedings. Reasons against a separation from the Church. Charles Wesley on the subject - - - - - 274
Conference of 1757. Mr. Mather sent out to travel as a married man. Methodism in Darlington - - 277
John MacGowan - - - - - 278
Conference of 1758. Organization of the Society at Norwich - - - - - - 281
Conference of 1759. Great revival of religion at Everton 283

PAGE
Conference of 1760. Edward Perronet - - 289
An extensive revival in many Societies - - - 290
Conference of 1761. Continued prosperity - - 291
Nineteenth Conference, 1762 - - - - 295
The schism, errors, and misconduct of T. Maxfield and G. Bell. Wesley's forbearance. The separation - 296
Erasmus, a Greek bishop, ordains Methodist preachers - 297
Institution of public prayer-meetings. Conference of 1763. List of Circuits. Worn-out Preachers' Fund 300
Conference of 1764 - - - - - - 302
Means devised for providing ministerial ordinances. They fail - - - - - - - 303
Lay preaching providentially appointed - - 305
The extensive and cruel persecutions by which Wesley and Methodism were opposed - - - - 308
Religious revivals - - - - - 314
Supernatural phenomena - - - - 316

CHAPTER III.

Conference of 1765. State of Methodism. The stations of the preachers in 1765 - - - - 318
Transactions of this Conference. Society tickets - - 321
The origin and object of Methodism - - - 322
Methodism introduced into Pontefract - - - 324
Travels and labours of Wesley this year - - 325
The cause of the progress of Methodism - - - 326
Methodism introduced into Glasgow - - - 328
Conference of 1766. Reasons for continued adhesion to the Church - - - - - 330
Effect of this decision on the character of the body - 333
The power exercised by Wesley questioned, and defended 334
Malignant persecution - - - - 337
Methodism introduced into Winchester - - - 339
Conference of 1767 - - - - - 340
Revival at Kingswood - - - - - 341
Expulsion of six students from Oxford - - 343
Conference of 1768. Preachers forbidden to carry on trade 344
Miss Bosanquet removes to Cross Hall, near Leeds - 347
Richard Rodda begins to preach - - - 348
Conference of 1769. Provision made for preachers' wives. Pecuniary means of the preachers still very inadequate 349
Introduction of Methodism into America - - 351
Captain Webb's preaching and usefulness. Progress of Methodism in New York - - - - 353
Boardman and Pilmoor sent to America - - 354

PAGE

Plan for perpetuating the union of the preachers in the event of Wesley's death - - - - 355
George Shadford - - - - - - 358
Twenty-seventh Conference, 1770: its proceedings - 360
Death of George Whitefield. Wesley preaches his funeral sermon - - - - - - 361
Calvinistic opposition to the "Minutes" of 1770 - 363
Progress of this opposition, and its issue in the publication of Fletcher's "Checks" - - - 364
Wesley explains and enforces Methodist discipline in Dublin - - - - - 372
Sampson Staniforth, and the work at Rotherhithe - 373
Conference of 1771: its transactions - - - 374
Prosperous state of the Society in Weardale - - 376
Conference of 1772 - - - - - 379
Wesley in Ireland. Persecution there. Progress of the work in America . - - - - 380
Mr. Fletcher continues the publication of his "Checks" 381
Fletcher's "Second Check" - - - - 382
Great religious importance of this controversy - - 383
Conference of 1773 - - - - - 384
Thomas Rankin and George Shadford sent to America - 385
The first American Conference. Mr. Fletcher's "Fifth Check." Wesley's Works published - - 386
Conference of 1774. James Rogers and Samuel Bradburn 387
Second American Conference - - - 390
Conference of 1775 - - - - - 391
Thorough examination of the qualifications of preachers. John Valton - - - - - 392
Third American Conference - - - - 394
Peril of the English preachers. Further controversial works of Mr. Fletcher - - - - 395
Conference of 1776. State of the Connexion. Further examination into qualifications of preachers. Advice respecting Calvinism - - - - 396
Dr. Coke seeks union with Wesley - - - 398
Revival in America. Conference held in Baltimore - 400
Publications of Wesley and Fletcher on the policy of England toward America - - - - 401
Arrangements for building City Road Chapel, London 403

CHAPTER IV.

The Conference of 1777. Inquiry into the state of the Connexion - - - - - 405
The progress of the work - - - - 406

PAGE
The American Conference, and state of Methodism in that country - - - - - - 408
Mr. James Rogers, and his remarkable interview with Mr. Fletcher - - - - - - 409
Wesley's proposals for publishing a monthly Magazine 411
Wesley receives Dr. Coke into his Connexion. The Doctor's conversion - - - - 412
First Conference in Ireland. Its discussions - - 417
George Lowe preaches his first sermon - - 418
Preachers' plans - - - - - 419
Two females allowed by Wesley to preach - - 420
Mrs. Fletcher's preaching at Huddersfield - - 421
The Conference of 1778. Application to send Missionaries to Africa - - - - - - 423
State of the Connexion - - - - - 424
Wesley opens City Road Chapel - - - 425
Opening of a new chapel at Halifax. Contentions and secessions from the Society - - - - 426
Noble efforts of Mr. Asbury and other preachers in America. The American Conference - - - - 428
The case of Abraham Brierly - - - - 430
The Conference of 1779. Decrease of members in many Circuits. Inquiries into the cause - - 432
Wesley leaves the Foundery for City Road Chapel - 433
Methodism in the Isle of Wight - - - 437
Great dissension among the Methodists of America - 438
Two rival Conferences in America. Progress of the work 439
The conduct of Mr. M'Nab causes serious dissension at Bath - - - - - - - 440
Its fatal consequences to the progress of religion - 441
The Conference of 1780. Serious misunderstanding between Dr. Coke and Mr. Benson - - - 442
Progress of the Connexion - - - - 443
Mr. Benson's first Sabbath at Leeds. William Green appointed to Salisbury - - - - 444
Methodism extended by means of pious soldiers at Winchester. Mr. Fletcher's interest in American Methodism. His eminent spirituality of mind - 445
The American Conferences. Powers awarded to Mr. Asbury as general superintendent - - - 447
His mission to the Conference of the south - - 448
The Conference of 1781 - - - - 451
Singular diversity in the printed Stations, in respect of John and Charles Wesley - - - - 454
Probability that Wesley hoped for the active co-operation of Mr. Fletcher - - - - 459

PAGE
The American Conference. Its transactions - - 460
The Conference of 1782. Six itinerant preachers desist from travelling - - - - - - 461
Severity of the preachers' labours and privations, and inadequate provision made for their support - - 462
The Birstal chapel case. Further transactions of the Conference - - - - - - 463
Adam Clarke places himself at the disposal of Wesley - 464
His previous history and experience - - - 465
Importance of this case - - - - - - 470
The American Conference. Wesley holds a Conference in Ireland - - - - - - 472
The Conference of 1783. Its proceedings. The American Conference - - - - - - 473
The state of the Societies. Revival at Winchester - 474
Rev. James Creighton becomes associated with Wesley - 479
Proposal for sending missionaries to the East considered. The Deed of Declaration. The occasion and history of this Deed - - - - - - 480
The Deed drawn and enrolled in Chancery - - 491
Calls forth violent opposition and agitation. Reasons for the course adopted by Wesley - - - 492
His course the best that could have been taken - - 493
Reasons why this Deed has been condemned - - 494
General spiritual prosperity in the Societies - - 496

CHAPTER V.

The Conference of 1784. Debate on the Deed of Declaration - - - - - - 498
The efforts of Mr. Fletcher to restore harmony - - 499
State of the Connexion. Introduction of Methodism into the Norman Isles - - - - 500
Mr. Brackenbury and Alexander Kilham. Persecution and progress of the work - - - - - 504
The twelfth American Conference - - - 505
Its proceedings. Wesley ordains ministers for America - 506
The measures thus devised adopted by the American Conference - - - - - - 514
Happy result of these measures - - - 515
Opposition to them in England. Charles Wesley's distress 517
Correspondence between him and his brother - - 518
Wesley rebukes Coke and Asbury. Purity of his intention 524
The Conference of 1785. Its proceedings - - 525
Three Methodist preachers ordained for Scotland - - 526
The Conference approves of the Deed of Declaration - 527

PAGE
The happy death of John Fletcher. Methodism in Antigua 528
The secession of the Hampsons and William Eels - 529
The Conference of 1786. The people desire the administration of the sacraments by the preachers - 531
The progressive increase of the Connexion. William Bramwell - - - - - - 533
Remarkable case of Messrs. Keighley and Burbeck - 540
The case of the Rev. Peard Dickenson - - - 542
Wesley's travels - - - - - 543
Dr. Coke in Antigua. Unpleasantness in the Society at Halifax - - - - - - 544
The conversion of a notorious sinner - - - 545
The Conference of 1787. The state of the Connexion - 546
Wesley ordains ministers for England - - 547
The preachers and chapels licensed. The death of Charles Wesley - - - - - 548
His character and usefulness - - - - 550
The Conference of 1788. Its proceedings - - 551
Methodism and the Church - - - - 554
New form of persecution - - - - 556
George Lowe an itinerant preacher - - - 557
Strange case of George Lukins - - - 559
Wesley's continued labours - - - - 560
The Conference of 1789. State of the Societies. Dewsbury chapel - - - - - - 562
Secession of Atlay. Loss of the Dewsbury Society - 563
The great importance of Wesley's decision in that case 564
Wesley's last journey to the north - - - 565
The Conference of 1790. State and extent of the Connexion - - - - - 570
Proceedings of the Conference - - - - 571
Judicious and successful ministry of George Lowe - 572
Last days of Wesley - - - - - 573
His death - - - - - - 576

BOOK III.

WESLEY AND THE METHODISM OF HIS TIMES.

CHAPTER I.

Importance of obtaining a just view of Wesley's religious character. The fruits of Wesley's labours - - 586
These results clearly indicate his sterling piety - 587
Wesley's religious reputation impugned - - - 588
His conversion a key to the character of his life - 589

PAGE
The objection of Isaac Taylor - - - - 590
Southey on the same subject - - - 591
Wesley's conversion truly scriptural. His pious conduct - 594
Southey's further allegations against Wesley repelled - 595
Dr. Southey, before his death, altered his views of Wesley's ruling motives - - - - - 599
Proofs of this change, and of his purpose to withdraw the charges - - - - - - 600
Objectionable manner in which Mr. Taylor speaks of Wesley - - - - - - 603
Wesley's alleged defects - - - - 604
Mr. Isaac Taylor's philosophy - - - - 605
Wesley's character - - - - - 606

CHAPTER II.

General orthodoxy of Methodist doctrines - - 607
Particular specification of doctrines. Justification by faith. What justification is meant - . - 608
The subjects of justification. Its nature - - - 609
The immediate results of justification. Its method - 611
Conscious conversion. The correspondence with John Smith - - - - - - - 613
The doctrine of universal redemption. Wesley's explanation of it - - - - - - - 614
Wesley's views of the tendency of Calvinistic doctrines to Antinomianism - - - - - 615
Important ends secured by Fletcher's "Checks" - - 617
Christian perfection - - - - - 618
Summary review of Wesleyan theology - - - 619
Wesleyan standard of religious doctrine. Wesleyan evangelization - - - - - - 621
Its success arose out of the vital truths which the preachers had received, and the divine influence which accompanied their word - - - - - 622
Mr. Isaac Taylor's views on this subject examined - 623
Other Wesleyan agencies. Prayer-meetings - - 625

CHAPTER III.

Wesleyan discipline did not originate in a preconceived plan. Its origin and character. Rules of the Society 627
Meeting in class essential to membership. Duties of a leader - - - - - - - 629
Leaders to act in accordance with the assistant. Regulations respecting the contributions in the classes - 633

PAGE
The office and duties of Society stewards - - - 634
The duties of office-bearers, as defined by Wesley - 637
Local preachers, exhorters, and trustees - - - 640
Discipline in regard of preachers - - - 641
Their itinerancy established. Objections to the absolute power of Wesley - - - - - 642
The Methodism of this period not a Church: nor Wesley's arrangements to be regarded as exhibiting his mature views of Methodist polity - - - 645
These views afterward greatly modified. Wesley's final views as to Methodist government and polity - 647
Illustrative anecdote of Wesley - - - 649

CHAPTER IV.

Circumstances which called for Wesleyan publications - 651
Wesley's "Sermons" - - - - 652
Wesley's Notes on the New and Old Testaments - - 656
Wesley's "Journals." Their literary notices - 657
The copiousness of the "Journals" - - - 661
Wesley's "Appeals" - - - - 663
Wesley's other publications - - - - 664
"Christian Library" - - - - 666
Epistolary correspondence. Wesleyan poetry - - 668
The Hymn Book. Its great excellence and importance 669
Musical publications. The effect of these literary efforts on the preachers - - - - - 671
The means for extending these advantages to the people 672

CHAPTER V.

The object and aim of this work - - - 673
There has been a great improvement in the country from the days of Wesley - - - - 674
The absence of any other efficient agent points out Wesley and Methodism as the cause. What constitutes a great reformation? - - - - - 675
Methodism introduced an improved agency for preaching 676
The preaching of the Methodists was effective - 678
These results were spread over the whole country, and were permanent - - - - - 680
Methodism brought into operation most of the agencies which distinguish the religion of the present time. Anti-slavery - - - - - 682
Relief of poor and sick. Dispensaries - - - 683
Education. Publication of Tracts - - - 687

APPENDICES.

	PAGE
The Savoy Conference, and its results	692
Ostentatious reference to aid afforded to Charles II. in his flight	694
Origin and application of the word "Methodism"	695
Extraordinary travels and labours of Wesley	695
The Rev. J. Wesley to Lord North, on the American war	700
Plan of the Leeds Circuit for the year 1777	702
Some of the Minutes of the American Conference, 1780	703
Account of the reconciliation of the two American Conferences, from Mr. Asbury's Journal	704
The Deed of Declaration	705
Letter to the Methodist Conference	709
Model Deed for the settlement of chapels	709
Rules of the United Societies	710
Extracts from the Large Minutes	711
List of works revised and abridged from various authors by the Rev. John Wesley, M.A.	716
List of poetical works published by the Rev. Messrs. John and Charles Wesley	720
Musical works published by the Rev. John Wesley, M.A.	722

HISTORY

OF

WESLEYAN METHODISM.

BOOK I.

THE RELIGIOUS CONDITION OF ENGLAND, AND THE FAMILY OF THE WESLEYS, BEFORE THE INTRODUCTION OF METHODISM.

CHAPTER I.

THE RELIGIOUS STATE OF ENGLAND BEFORE THE INTRODUCTION OF METHODISM.

This investigation necessary: its nature and extent.

Methodism arose out of a remarkable manifestation of the gracious providence of God. An intelligible account of its origin and progress is therefore necessary and important. But in order to the correct apprehension of this information, the reader should be previously informed of the religious state of the nation at the time of its introduction. This cannot be done by referring merely to events immediately connected with the days in which the Wesleys lived and laboured. The religious condition of this period was the result of long anterior causes and circumstances. It is necessary, therefore, to extend our retrospect to times much earlier than those which are the principal objects of attention. But although our range of

research must be extensive, we need not go largely into detail. A full investigation would require a volume: a brief sketch will answer our present purpose.

The state of the nation under the Tudors.

Prior to the reign of Henry VIII., the power of the pope in all religious matters was supreme in this country, and the consequences were the same as have been produced in every nation in which Popery has held unlimited sway. Dense religious darkness, general ignorance, and extensive immorality, characterized all classes of the population.

Henry threw off the yoke of Rome. He and his parliament repudiated the authority of the pope in 1534, when the sovereign was declared to be the head of the English Church. The Bible was also translated into the English language, and a copy ordered to be placed in every church. Yet, although these measures exercised a salutary influence, little was done to disseminate the pure light of the Gospel among the people. None but persons above the lower classes were allowed to possess Bibles; and six articles of faith* were enforced as the standard of orthodoxy, a dissent from any of which constituted a capital crime. For denying these, Lambert, a clergyman, and many others were executed.

It is scarcely possible to depict the state of England, during this season of despotism and darkness, in shades too deep or terms too strong. The land lay prostrate at the feet of a rapacious and sensual tyrant. No power existed which could save the property of his subjects from his cupidity, or their lives from his cruelty. No sex or

* They were:—1. The belief in transubstantiation. 2. That the communion in both kinds was not necessary. 3. That it was not lawful for priests to marry. 4. That vows of chastity were not to be broken. 5. That private masses were profitable; and, 6. That auricular confession was necessary.

age was sufficient to shield those who stood in the way of his licentious excesses, or were the victims of his malignity. If he was the first to throw off the priestly tyranny of Rome, it was that he might revel in the indulgence of unbridled passion. If he freed the country from the numerous and enormous monastic establishments which were preying on its vitals, it was that he might thus grasp the means of continued libidinous gratification, and be able to reward those who ministered to his wickedness. In a word, his general policy was infamous; and those actions of his which, in their nature and ulterior results, were favourable to truth and beneficial to the nation, were, in their immediate object and aim, politically and religiously great iniquities. It must be admitted, that all this misrule could not paralyse the intellect, crush the ardour, or break the spirit of Englishmen; but it went as far as possible towards it. It depressed all interests and all ranks, rendered the nobles insecure of property and life, and kept the people in ignorance and bondage. As if the darkest hour of Britain's history was immediately to precede the dawn of a Gospel day; this tyrannical and voluptuous king rioted in his abominations just before the Gospel was announced by pious ministers, and the English Bible was given to the people.

The short reign of Edward VI. did more than any equal period of England's history to meliorate the religious condition of the country. The doctrines of the Gospel were ably, zealously, and faithfully preached by Cranmer, Hooper, Ridley, Latimer, and other pious prelates and ministers. And copies of the Scriptures were multiplied and circulated as freely as the state of learning and the circumstances of the people would allow. Forty-nine editions of the sacred record, namely, thirty-five of the New Testament and four-

teen of the complete Bible, were printed and published in England during the six years and a half of the young king's reign.

The dawning of hope for the religion of Britain which these propitious circumstances justified, was obscured by the death of Edward, and the accession of Mary, in 1553, who restored the papal authority. The prelates and others who had suffered imprisonment in the preceding reign for their political and religious opinions, were now invested with unlimited power, which they used with the most vigilant and merciless zeal. Hooper, Cranmer, Ridley, Latimer, and many more were burned; and hundreds besides perished in loathsome prisons, and by various hardships and tortures. This queen, indeed, seemed to aim at the extirpation of Protestantism and the subjection of England to the power of Spain.

Mary died, and Elizabeth ascended the throne, in 1558. Scarcely ever did a single reign produce a greater change in a nation than that which took place during the time when this queen sat on the British throne. Her grand purpose was to re-establish the Reformation; and so far as legislation can change the religion of a country, this was soon accomplished. Act after Act was passed for the purpose; and in a single session the whole form of religion was established as it is now substantially found in the National Church. But the real religious effect of this outward change is best seen in the fact, that out of 9,400 beneficed clergymen in the kingdom, only 15 bishops, 12 archdeacons, 15 heads of colleges, 50 canons, and 80 parochial priests,—in all, 172 persons,—quitted their preferments rather than change their religion from the extreme Popery of Mary's reign to what is called the thorough Protestantism of that of Elizabeth.

The religious policy of this queen, and the encouragement given by her government to maritime enterprise and commerce, greatly increased the population, wealth, and prosperity of the country: so that, although threatened by powerful enemies, and opposed by mighty armaments, the British queen triumphed over all opposition through a long and successful reign. It must not, however, be supposed that constitutional liberty, either civil or religious, was at this time established in England. The sovereign still possessed so many indirect sources of income, as to be almost independent of parliamentary grants. Both Mary and Elizabeth increased some branches of the customs merely by an order in council. Royal proclamations, previously declared by Parliament to be equivalent to law, were now regarded as omnipotent. By this means statutes were altered or repealed; the costumes, diet, or arms of the people regulated; and even legal decisions, in ordinary courts, perverted. Arbitrary imprisonments were common; torture was not unfrequently employed to extort confession; and such was the predominance of royal power, that neither judge nor jury dared to resist the will of the crown.

This tyranny, however, was still more monstrous and galling in its application to religion. At the beginning of this reign the "Star Chamber" was in full operation. The members of this court were the principal officers of state, and held their places during the pleasure of the crown. In their mode of examination, and in awarding the penalty, they were under the direction of no law, and limited by only one condition,—that they should not inflict capital punishment. The Court of High Commission exercised a still more arbitrary jurisdiction: it was chiefly directed against the undefinable crime of heresy,

and was a terrible engine of oppression. When these failed to accomplish the will of the sovereign, martial law was resorted to,—a measure which placed the life and liberty of every subject in the power of the crown.

Origin and increase of the Puritans.

The rapid growth of Puritanism during this reign, although little noticed by historians, deserves attention, as having greatly contributed to the events which afterward occurred. As early as the time of Edward VI., many conscientious persons were dissatisfied with the Reformation then introduced. They agreed generally with the doctrines established, but they desired the removal from the Church of what they regarded as the remains of Popery in respect of vestments, ceremonies, images, ornaments, and other things of similar character. So that when Elizabeth passed her "Act of Uniformity," and had it rigidly applied to the whole kingdom, although the great body of the Romish clergy conformed to the appointed orders, numbers of devout and enlightened men refused to continue in a Church, whose ritual and external services contained what they regarded as elements of Papal superstition, which were now made binding, under heavy penalties, on every individual minister.

But the increase of Puritanism was effected nearly as much by the character, condition, and conduct of those who remained in the Church, as by the piety, zeal, and energy of those who left it. The greater part of the country clergy were so ignorant, that they could do little more than read: many of them became carpenters and tailors, because they could not subsist upon their benefices, and some even kept ale-houses. During the first years of Elizabeth's reign, in many of the London parishes service was performed by the sextons; and in very many vicarages, some of them in good provincial towns, the people were

forced to provide for themselves as they could.* These circumstances offered great opportunities to the Puritans; and a numerous and intelligent religious confederacy arose, which secretly maintained the propriety and necessity of conforming the Church fully to the model of the New Testament; and which, although remaining in the Establishment, was as far estranged from it on the one side, as the Papists were on the other. This body was hated and persecuted by the queen, although respected and befriended by many of her ablest ministers.

The Stuarts, and their measures respecting religion.

The death of Elizabeth (1603) placed James I., of the house of Stuart, on the throne, and brought England and Scotland under one government. This reign, although it produced no very remarkable events, prepared the country for the terrible struggle which followed. Elizabeth's foreign and commercial policy had secured for the nation a position and prosperity which even James's folly and imbecility could not destroy, and which were sufficient to carry the king through all the difficulties which he had to encounter; but it had done more than this,—it had raised up a powerful and wealthy commonalty. Through the piety and energy of the Puritans, and the zeal for Calvinistic tenets with which they were now inflamed, the people were to a greater extent than ever hostile to the Church, and disposed to regard the government which patronized and sustained it as partial and unjust.

Charles I. succeeded his father in 1625. This sovereign, weak in judgment, passionate in temper, and obstinate in disposition, was, from his accession, beset with difficulties of the greatest magnitude, which he was utterly unable to overcome. Like all his family, he was fond of arbitrary power, and had an evident partiality for Popery; which, as the House of Commons was strongly imbued with the

* SOUTHEY'S "Life of Wesley," vol. i., p. 278.

spirit of the Puritans, gave little hope of harmonious action. But a rupture took place earlier than might have been expected. In the first year of his reign, the lower House of Parliament appointed a Committee of Religion, which proceeded to *exhibit* a book written by Dr. Montague, and by which he was charged with endeavouring to reconcile England with Rome, and to alienate the King's affections from his well-disposed subjects. Under some circumstances, such measures would be of little importance to the sovereign: but Charles entered on the government burdened with debts incurred by his father and himself to the amount of £600,000; to meet which he had only two subsidies, of about £145,000.*

But the ill-feeling which had arisen between the king and the representatives of the people might have been removed, or at least greatly diminished, by a conciliatory policy in respect of religion on the part of Charles and his advisers. Unhappily, instead of this, a course was taken which was regarded as directly promotive of Popery, and which, consequently, greatly inflamed the majority in the House of Commons and the Puritans throughout the country.†

* His first Parliament had so little sympathy with his wants, that they granted him no further pecuniary means: and when it was dissolved, the king was left engaged in a war with Spain without resources, and in such need that he had to borrow £3,000 from the corporations of Salisbury and Southampton, to provide for his own table.

† Orders were given, and rigorously insisted on, that the communion table should be removed from the middle of the church, where it had stood since the Reformation, to the east end; where it should be railed in, and denominated "the altar." Kneeling at "the altar," and the use of the cope, an embroidered vestment, in administering the Lord's Supper, were introduced, to the great discontent of the people, who knew such to be the practice in Popish countries; and some pictures were again put up in the churches by Archbishop Laud's command.

Injudicious policy of the king and Laud.

The people had become enlightened by the labours and influence of more learned and able ministers; more wealthy, powerful, and independent, from the successful results of their extensive commercial operations; and they felt these aggressions on their religion more keenly, and were prepared with greater effect to resist them; and they were stimulated to the greatest exertion in this resistance, by the conduct of the court and High Church party; who, not content with the operation of the fatal error made at the Reformation, by which "the Protestant confession was drawn up with the purpose of including Catholics," as is boldly maintained at the present day,* aggravated and extended the evil. All such clergymen as neglected to observe every ceremony were suspended, and deprived of their benefices, by the Court of High Commission; and, to mortify the Puritans farther, orders were issued from the Council, forbidding any controversy, either from the pulpit or the press, on the points in dispute between them and their opponents concerning free will and predestination, which were then beginning to be openly mooted.

"In return for Charles's indulgence toward the Church, Laud and his followers took care to magnify on every occasion the regal authority, and to treat with the utmost indignation all Puritanical pretensions to a free and independent constitution. The king's divine, hereditary, and indefeasible right was the theme of every sermon; and those who attempted to question such doctrines, were considered as making an attack upon religion itself. But while these prelates were liberal in raising the crown at the expense of public liberty, they themselves made no scruple of encroaching on the most incontestable of the royal rights, in order to exalt the hierarchy. All the doctrines

* "Oxford Tracts for the Times," No. XC., p. 83.

of the Romish Church which freed the spiritual from subordination to the civil power, were now adopted by the Church of England, and an apostolical charter was insisted upon in preference to a parliamentary." * Indeed, all the open and avowed measures of the court and superior clergy, it was generally believed, tended to assimilate the Church of England to that of Rome; and the private and indirect means employed were even more portentous. The queen, who was a Papist, had a gentleman in her service, resident at Rome; but that he did not limit his correspondence and action to communications between a subject, however exalted, and the pontiff, is evident from the following extract from a letter of the learned Grotius: "A certain person, who is well acquainted with the court of Rome, and intimate with the nuncio, assures me, that the Englishman who resides at Rome, does not, as it was said, transact business with the pope in the queen's name, but in that of the king of England himself. From this fact, and other indications, it is amazing what hopes the Papists conceive about England."† The consequences of this policy were twofold: while it rendered the Puritans hostile to the Establishment, just in proportion to their sincerity, zeal, and devotedness to their own doctrinal tenets and ecclesiastical polity; it enabled those ministers who were so disposed, to give the Church a decidedly Popish appearance. These circumstances provoked the indignation and violent enmity of the Commons, who used every means in their power to vex and harass the clergy.

Nor was it thought sufficient to introduce Popish usages into the services of the Church, and to sustain the arbi-

* "Universal History," vol. lviii., p. 77.

† Letter to Chancellor Oxenstiern, dated December 12th, 1636.

trary claims of the court by the utmost influence of the clergy. Measures were introduced and enjoined by Charles and his ministers, calculated to lead the people into the worst faults of Popish countries. In the early part of this reign, a complaint was made to the judges on the Western Circuit, as to the mischievous effects produced by the revels, sports, church-ales, and other occasions of riot and debauchery on the Lord's Day. The judges, thus appealed to by the county magistrates, made an order for suppressing such practices on Sundays, and, on their return to the circuit at a following assize, they punished a few persons for disobeying this order. Archbishop Laud, having been informed of these circumstances, induced the king to summon Lord Chief Justice Richardson before the Council, where he was sharply reprimanded for his conduct, and enjoined to revoke the order which he had made, at the next assizes; and, as if removing all obstruction to the desecration of the Sabbath were not sufficient, the king was advised to republish a Declaration issued by James I. in 1618, for the purpose of allowing and promoting Sunday sports. By this means full liberty and encouragement were given to dancing of men and women, archery for men, leaping, vaulting, May-games, Whitsun-ales, morris-dances, May-poles, and other sports, after the church services on Sundays. And His Majesty's pleasure was declared to be, that the bishops should take measures for constraining the people to conform to these practices, or to leave the country. These and other measures of this reign called forth a resistance by which the foundation of English society was shaken to its centre.

But it is necessary to advert to other operating causes in this frightful struggle. Nothing can give the mind a more false and distorted view of this page of history, than

to regard it as a contest between a Romanizing and power-grasping sovereign, on the one hand; and his pious, zealous, and spiritually-minded subjects, goaded to rebellion by acts of oppression, on the other. The character of the court has been already given; but what was the religious character of the leaders of the parliamentary opposition? That many of them were to a certain extent conscientious, God-fearing men, cannot be doubted; and may not as much as this be admitted of Charles I. and Archbishop Laud? It was not from motives of pure and fervent piety that the leaders of the House of Commons leagued together against their sovereign and the Church of England; nor were godliness and truth the bond of their union. They were in general Ultra-Calvinistic Presbyterians. Thoroughly imbued with the doctrines of absolute election and reprobation, and inflamed with a desire to bring all church government to the model of the great Genevan Reformer, united, struggled, and fought to accomplish their object, in the universal establishment of his doctrines and ritual. Hence we find prelacy declaimed against more than Popery, and Arminianism hated as much as either. In proof of which we hear John Goodwin saying, "Call a man an Arminian, and you have called him constructively, yea, eminently, *Thief, Traitor, Murderer, Heretic, False Prophet*, and whatsoever else soundeth *infamy or reflection* upon men."* On January 20th, 1629, Oliver Cromwell informed the House of Commons that Neil, bishop of Winchester, was countenancing Arminianism, which was denounced as the spawn of Popery. Seven years before these troubles began in England, the Synod of Dort had established the Calvinistic doctrines and Presbyterian form

* Jackson's "Life of John Goodwin."

of Church government in Holland, by cruelly driving into banishment every minister who held religious opinions differing from theirs. It was on this model that the Presbyterian party in the British House of Commons laboured; and, to establish a uniformity of doctrine and discipline of this kind, they pursued a course of action which tended to plunge the nation into civil war.

Expulsion of the bishops and re-modelling of the Church.

The Scots had already effected this object. Seeing the difficulty in which the king was embroiled with his English subjects, the Parliament of that country met, expelled the bishops from their sees, and confirmed the Acts of the General Assembly, which had adopted the Calvinistic doctrine and the Presbyterian form of ecclesiastical polity. Their co-religionists in the English House of Commons followed their example, and soon after passed a Bill for excluding bishops from the House of Lords, and providing that no clergyman should be in the commission of the peace. The Upper House at first refused to give their assent to this Bill. A burst of popular excitement ensued, in which many peers, and especially the bishops, were annoyed and assaulted in their passage to the House. The prelates, with the archbishop of York at their head, then issued a protestation, stating that, having been hindered by the populace from going to the House of Lords, they should go there no more; protesting at the same time against all laws enacted during their absence. This false step sealed their fate. The Commons, delighted with the opportunity, impeached all the bishops of high treason, and caused them to be sequestered from Parliament, and placed in custody. A Bill was then hurried through both Houses to deprive them in future of seats in Parliament; and this Act the king, distracted

and humbled by increasing difficulties, was induced to confirm.

Episcopacy suspended, and Presbyterian polity introduced.

To supply the place of the prelates, an Assembly of Divines was summoned to meet at Westminster. This body proceeded to re-model the Church on a Presbyterian basis. The Liturgy was abolished, and a Directory for conducting public worship published in its stead. All hope of a peaceful accommodation between the opposing parties was now at an end; a deadly war raged throughout the country. The struggle was for a considerable time decidedly in favour of the king. Essex wrote to the Parliament, complaining of the inefficient state of his army, and advising that terms of accommodation should be proposed. The Commons rejected his advice, but directed their attention to a means of restoring their wasted strength. They knew the Scots felt the greatest anxiety that the English nation should adopt their religious polity, and the Solemn League and Covenant; and the English Commons thought it wise to submit to those terms, if they could thereby secure the aid of the Scottish army. Accordingly, negotiations were opened between the Presbyterians of the two countries. The result is best seen in the following facts.

Success of the Parliament through the aid of the Scots.

The Earl of Essex wrote his desponding letter to the House of Commons on the 9th of July, 1643. On September 25th following, both the Houses of Parliament, as then sitting, received the Scotch commissioners at Westminster, and took the Solemn League and Covenant, and enjoined it on all the country; the commissioners announcing at the same time the determination of the States of Scotland to assist the English Parliament. On January 19th, 1644, 18,000 Scotch infantry and 2,500 cavalry crossed the border at Berwick, to act in conjunction with

the parliamentary army. On the 26th of April, the Scots united with the troops of Fairfax, and laid siege to York; and on July 2nd and 3rd the allied army defeated the king's troops at Marston Moor, which inflicted such a fearful loss on the royalist cause as destroyed its hope of success; all that took place afterward was merely a struggle for existence. The king kept the field only a year longer, when the battle of Naseby completed his ruin. On May 5th, 1646, he surrendered himself to the Scots; and on the 6th of July the House of Commons voted that the aid of the Scottish army was no longer necessary. Thus it is seen that this war, in its success as well as in its origin and spirit, was the result of powerful religious conviction and feeling. To carry into effect the engagement with the Scotch, it was ordered that the Covenant should be taken by all persons above the age of eighteen; and, as this instrument bound all who received it to endeavour to extirpate diocesan episcopacy, its enforcement was an act of great cruelty, and led to the ejection of 1,600 beneficed clergymen from their livings. Those who were thus ejected were, however, but a small part of the clergy who suffered on this occasion; for, as the ministers of the Established Church were generally devoted to the cause of the king, and almost necessarily opposed to the designs of the Presbyterian party, great numbers of them had, by overt action, offended the dominant power, and were consequently subjected more or less to punishment. But if we may rely on the testimony of Burnet, Baxter, Thurloe, and others, all the ejections of the period did not take place on political or sectarian grounds; many having been occasioned by the gross ignorance, shameful neglect of duty, or notorious immorality of the ministers.

When the Parliament had, with the aid of the Scots,

completely subdued their sovereign, and while they held him a prisoner, overtures of accommodation were proposed, which might have issued in preserving the life of that unhappy king, and even in restoring him to power, had not the violent religious prejudices of the times, and the combined presumption and insincerity of Charles, cut off this hope, and hastened his execution. If the king had been more sincere, and less open to the charge of duplicity, he would in all probability have fared better; and if not, certainly his fall would have called forth more commiseration. After a civil war, which, although carried on with desperate ardour on both sides, was less disgraced by massacre and desolation, and distinguished by more mildness, than any other on record of similar magnitude, this sovereign perished on the scaffold. Perhaps no more striking proof of the result of this contest on the public mind can be given, than the fact, that although previously money could scarcely ever be borrowed for less than eight *per cent.*, after the establishment of the Commonwealth it immediately fell to six.

Usurpation of the House of Commons.

The government which destroyed Charles, and succeeded him in power, was simply the Commons' House of Parliament, arrogating to itself, and for a while exercising, all the attributes and powers of the three estates of the realm. This usurpation began in the early part of his reign, and caused the ruin of the constitution and the death of the king. Its utmost energy was, indeed, exerted to destroy the power of the crown, and to re-model the Church.

It is truly wonderful that violent opinions respecting religion should have directed every step of our national history at this period. After the death of the king, Cromwell soon took measures which clearly indicated that he aimed at the possession of supreme power; but the means

by which he was able to accomplish this object are but little known, and seldom recognised. The Presbyterians were paramount in the Parliament, and were as intolerant as any of their opponents. There was, indeed, scarcely any part of ecclesiastical polity,—except prelacy,—against which they had inveighed when in subjection, that they did not adopt and practise when in power. Milton assures us,* that the men who had preached so earnestly against the avarice and pluralities of bishops and other ministers, as soon as they had the power, began to practise with the most grasping cupidity all the abuses which they had condemned. And so in the case before us. Those who had pleaded so earnestly for liberty of conscience, and who had deprecated the interference of the civil power in matters purely religious, now that they were at the helm of affairs, repudiated toleration most vehemently. A letter was sent by the Presbyterian ministers of London to the Assembly of Divines at Westminster, dated January 1st, 1645; in which, after giving many reasons against allowing toleration to the Independents, they say, "A toleration! a toleration! We detest and abhor the much-endeavoured toleration! Our bowels, our bowels are stirred within us, and we could even drown ourselves in tears, when we call to mind how long and sharp a travail this kingdom hath been in for many years together, to bring forth the blessed fruit of a pure and perfect reformation; and now at last, after all our pangs, and dolors, and expectations, this real and thorough reformation is in danger of being strangled in the birth by a lawless toleration, that strives to be brought forth before it." † And Milton, who perfectly understood the character of this Assembly, says,

* Prose Works, vol. iv., p. 84. Edition of 1806.

† Jackson's "Life of John Goodwin," p. 108.

"They endeavoured to set up a spiritual tyranny by a secular power, for the purpose of advancing their own authority above the magistrate, whom they would have made their executioner to punish Church delinquences." *

But while these doctrines ruled in the Assembly and the Parliament, Cromwell and the predominant religious party in the army professed a leaning to Independency. He availed himself of these rival elements with the hand of a master, and so adroitly poised the strength of the army against that of the Parliament, that he was soon invested virtually, if not formally, with supreme power. The scheme of polity, called "the Government of England," drawn up at the time, provided "that all classes of people should enjoy the free exercise of their religion, who *professed faith in God by Jesus Christ.*" †

Absolute power of Cromwell.

Oliver Cromwell by these means acquired complete ascendancy. The nation was weary of intestine strife; and, without having obtained civil liberty,—the avowed object of the bloody struggle,—sat down contentedly under his sway, in the enjoyment of religious toleration. But even this boon was not of long continuance. The transfer of power from the Presbyterian to the Independent body made no immediate alteration in the organization of the Church. Until 1653, the several presbyteries, in town and country, retained the privilege of approving and accepting young ministers. The Protector then, perceiving that this practice placed a dangerous power in the hands of this party, appointed thirty-eight persons, whom he called "triers," selected from the Presbyterians, Baptists, and Independents, who were to examine and receive all candidates for the ministry. They are said by Mr. Baxter to

* Milton's Prose Works, vol. iv., p. 26. Edition of 1806.

† Jackson's "Life of John Goodwin," p. 307.

have discharged this duty with judgment and fidelity; but others aver that, being almost equally opposed to profaneness, prelacy, and Arminianism,—although they saved many a congregation from ignorant, ungodly, drunken teachers, they were too lax in the admission of unlearned and erroneous men, and sometimes excluded persons of eminent piety and abilities, because they did not approve of their doctrinal views. Every instance of this kind would, of course, be regarded as a breach of the promised toleration.

We fear the religious character of this period has been but seldom accurately appreciated. The Commonwealth prohibited immorality by law in an extravagant manner. Vice was punished with Draconian severity. Adultery was a capital crime. Fornication was punished with three months' imprisonment for the first offence; for the second, with death. Almost all recreations were prohibited, and the external appearance of religion was so rigidly enforced as to be largely productive of hypocrisy. Yet it cannot be doubted, that the open practice of vice and profligacy was greatly checked by these measures, although the surface of society presented an appearance which was far from being a fair index of the real state of education, morals, and religion. For public morals were in as bad a condition a year prior to the Restoration as they were in 1637. This was in a great degree owing to the unsettled state of the nation, subject to perpetual intercourse with the military, who were not ascetics in piety: the heads of the different religious parties had embroiled themselves in politics, and had lost much of their pristine zeal and earnestness.

The country at length became impatient of enduring this government. The people saw that they had only

changed a legitimate monarchy—prone, it may be confessed, to arbitrary measures—for the rule of an absolute governor. This conviction prepared the way for the Restoration. On the death of Cromwell his son Richard was declared Lord Protector; but the reins of power soon fell from his feeble grasp. He retired into private life, and Charles II., eldest son of the late king, was placed on the throne.

Hasty and unwise manner of the Restoration.

One of the most fatal errors ever made in the political affairs of any nation, was committed in the very hasty restoration of this monarch. If ordinary caution and discretion had been used, the constitutional liberty of the country might have been placed on a firm and durable foundation. But this most favourable opportunity was entirely thrown away. Instead of being restored under such guarantees as were calculated to secure the liberty of the subject and the freedom of religion, Charles was placed on the throne with such precipitancy, that the event assumed rather the appearance of a triumph of those principles and practices which caused the ruin of his father. The long-continued course of exertion and sacrifice which had cost so much blood and treasure, and occasioned so much mischief and misery throughout the kingdom, was therefore utterly unavailing. It is, indeed, true that Charles, pending the brief negotiations for his restoration, had engaged to grant a general amnesty to all persons, without any exceptions but such as should be made by Parliament, and to secure to every subject perfect liberty of conscience. We are assured by competent authority, that it was generally understood the declaration of the king at Breda at least virtually promised, that "uniformity of discipline and worship should for the present not be insisted on; that the Presbyterian and Independent

preachers should during their lives be continued in the churches where they were settled; ejecting only those who had been forcibly intruded, to the prejudice of persons yet alive, and who might legally claim re-instatement; and filling up the vacancies of such as died, with ministers episcopally ordained and canonically obedient."* Measures were taken in the House of Commons to give this understanding the form and force of law. The Convention Parliament, which recognised the second Charles as lawful sovereign, met on the 25th of April, 1660; and on the 9th of May following, a Bill for establishing ministers settled in ecclesiastical livings was read a first time. On the 16th of the same month this Bill was read a second time, and committed. On May 29th the king came to Whitehall; and on June 1st the Convention was changed to a Parliament. The above Bill, or another for the settlement of religion, was submitted to a grand committee, which met twice in July, but to no purpose. The committee adjourned to the 23rd of October, and then referred the matter to the king and a select number of divines; but their deliberations, and those of the famous Savoy Conference, were ineffectual.† Nothing was really accomplished for securing the religious liberties of the people, or their civil and constitutional privileges. Of this neglect those in power soon took a terrible advantage.

The court party was not satisfied with restoring the expelled bishops and ministers of the Church; they proceeded to make direct aggression on the religious and civil liberties of those who differed from them. An Act was soon passed, which required that all magistrates, mayors, and other officers of corporations, before entering on office,

* Bishop Heber's "Life of Jeremy Taylor."

† See Appendix A, at the end of this volume.

should take an oath, declaring that it was unlawful, under any pretence, to take up arms against the sovereign; and which made it essential to admission into every such office, that the person should have received the sacrament according to the rites of the Established Church within a year before such election or appointment. An Act of Uniformity was also speedily passed, which obliged all ministers holding livings in the Establishment "to assent and consent to all contained in the Book of Common Prayer; to take the oath of canonical obedience; to receive episcopal ordination, if not previously so ordained; and to abjure the Solemn League and Covenant." Rather than adopt this declaration, two thousand ministers gave up their livings, and were expelled from the Church.

Such a marked retaliation as this had never before been known in the history of the Protestant Church. Hundreds of the men who a few years before most earnestly protested against granting toleration, were now compelled piteously, but in vain, to beg for liberty of conscience. Nor was this all. Many others, who were known to have sympathized with those lately in power, were harassed, under various pretexts, with prosecutions, and several of them driven from the Church. But these measures were exceeded in enormity by the passing of the Conventicle Act in May, 1664; by which more than five persons beside the resident family were prohibited from meeting for any religious purpose not according to the Book of Common Prayer, under the penalty of three months' imprisonment, to be inflicted, on the evidence of any informer, by any justice of the peace. This punishment was for the first offence; for the second it was doubled; and the third exposed the offender to transportation beyond the seas for seven years. Sheriffs, or justices of the peace, or others commissioned by

them, were empowered to break up and disperse all unlawful conventicles, and to take into custody such of the members as they might think fit. Married women taken at such meetings might be imprisoned for twelve months, unless their husbands redeemed them by paying a fine.

The effects of these measures were dreadful. Great numbers were imprisoned; pious persons were driven to meet for worship in solitude and at midnight; and many sought deliverance from such tyranny by emigrating to the American Colonies. But even this measure did not satisfy the overbearing cruelty of those in power. They afterwards passed an Act by which ejected ministers were prohibited, under severe penalties, from coming within five miles of any place in which they had formerly been ministers, or of any borough town. This measure fearfully added to the miseries caused by the preceding enactments.

Object of Charles in this persecuting policy.

No doubt is now entertained that while this excessive persecution of Protestant Nonconformists was carried on by Clarendon and his colleagues in the ministry through earnest High Church zeal, it was assented to by the king, not from the same principle, but in the hope that it would become so intolerable to the nation, that the Parliament would be obliged to concede general liberty of conscience, by which means he would be enabled to remove all the existing restrictions on Popery. Charles II. never had full confidence in his English subjects; and, while greedily grasping Gallic bribes, wished a closer alliance with France, which he could scarcely hope to secure so long as Popery was rigidly proscribed in his own country. Besides, his brother James, Duke of York, had avowed himself publicly to be a Papist; and, as such, had refused to comply with the Test Act, and in consequence had thrown up all his public employments.

The Restoration, however, not only issued in the intolerant and persecuting measures which have been named; it completely removed the general appearance of morality which had been enforced by the government of Cromwell, and opened wide the flood-gates of licentiousness and vice. The court was the seat of wholesale prostitution. The king was a confirmed voluptuary; and being an utter stranger to virtue himself, he was careless of it in others. He is acknowledged to have been the father of at least eleven children born of seven different women, who lived successively with him as mistresses, although he had a queen the whole time, who had to meet and mix up with these women at court. This profligacy exerted a fatal influence on the people, and soon greatly affected the morals of the nation. Wild licentiousness was accompanied by corresponding progress in brutality and violence. Sir John Coventry, having said something offensive to the king's mistresses, was seized in the streets of London by some courtiers, who slit his nose open. Vice stalked through the land without disguise. Buckingham, Rochester, Sir Charles Sedley, and the Killigrews, were most distinguished for their wit and libertinism. Charles laughed at their follies, and, by his example and that of his cavaliers, rendered licentiousness and debauchery generally prevalent. Drunkenness was common; conversation was fearfully corrupted: the coarsest jests and most indecent words were admitted amongst the highest classes, and even disgraced the literature of the day. The stage, copying the living manners of the times, united the profligacy of the French with the rudeness of English manners. Nearly all the actresses were in the keeping of the aristocracy, and a few were the acknowledged wives of noblemen. Sir John Denham and Lord Chesterfield have been charged with

poisoning their wives; and the latter is alleged to have aggravated the horror of the offence by administering the fatal dose in the wine at the Communion. The abandoned Buckingham lived in open adultery with the Countess of Shrewsbury; the injured husband challenged him; they met, when the duke mortally wounded the earl, and then took the profligate countess to his wife in his own house. It is thus, as is forcibly observed by the most eminent of living historians, "an unquestionable and most instructive fact, that the years during which the political power of the Anglican hierarchy was in the zenith, were precisely the years during which national virtue was at the lowest point." *

Believing he had carried his coercive measures far enough to answer his purpose, the king, during a parliamentary recess, published a Proclamation, by which he allowed to Protestant Dissenters the public exercise of their religion, and to Papists the privilege of conducting their worship in private houses. On the assembling of Parliament, the Commons complained of this use of the royal prerogative, and the liberty was withdrawn. Yet although the king appeared always ready to defer to the strongly expressed wishes of the Commons, he pursued his course of public policy with great success, and so intrenched himself in power by various means, that before his death "his government was as absolute as that of any monarch in Europe." † Yet, even from this sovereign, so intrenched in power, an invaluable element of civil liberty was wrung by the patriotic efforts of an able and energetic private citizen. When Penn and Mead, the Quakers, were tried at the Old Bailey, in April, 1670, for preaching, the

* Macaulay's "History of England," vol. i., p. 181.

† "Universal History," vol. lviii., p. 243

jury, encouraged by one of their number named Bushel, in defiance of the direction of the court, acquitted the prisoners; and the recorder who tried the case set a fine of forty marks on each of the jurors. This had long been the practice adopted to make juries subservient to the court, thus rendering trial by jury a mockery. But on this occasion the tyranny was defeated. Bushel refused to pay the fine, was committed to prison, and at once sued out a writ of Habeas Corpus. On the return being made to this writ, after a very able argument, the fine and imprisonment were pronounced illegal: a decision which fully secured the privilege of trial by jury in all its integrity to the people of England.

Accession of James II. His religious designs.

On the death of Charles II., in 1685, his brother, James Duke of York, an avowed Papist, ascended the throne. Had this prince aimed simply at the consummation of a civil despotism, there is little reason to doubt, that, with ordinary prudence and spirit, he might have succeeded: his brother had sufficiently prepared the way for this end. But if James was despotic, it was rather as a means to an ulterior object than for its own sake. He was a bigoted Papist, and bent the whole power of his policy, and all the energies of his government, to establish the Romish faith, and to make Popery the dominant religion of the land.

Having assembled the Privy Council, he assured them that he would maintain the established order of things both in Church and State. His conduct, however, soon belied his professions. The Customs and the greater part of the Excise, which had been voted to the late king for his life only, he immediately appropriated to his own use, without any new Act for the purpose. He likewise went openly to mass with the ensigns of royalty, and sent an agent to treat with Rome.

Rebellion of Monmouth. Cruelties of Jeffreys.

The general apprehension of the people, that James would conduct the nation back to Popery, encouraged the Duke of Monmouth, an illegitimate son of the late king, to come to England, and make an attempt on the crown. He landed in Dorsetshire, and was soon followed by a numerous body of men; but being ill provided with arms and other necessaries, he was completely defeated by the royal forces at Bridgewater, his followers routed, and himself soon afterward taken prisoner and executed. This insurrection was followed by a merciless slaughter of all persons supposed to have been implicated in it. The notorious Judge Jeffreys, with four others, was sent into the west to try and punish the prisoners, when multitudes, women as well as men, were transported or executed. A Major-general Kirk, who was one of these four, committed the most diabolical cruelties, besides executing many persons without even the form of trial.*

* Turning with disgust from these sickening tragedies, the reader will be gratified with a more pleasant narrative, containing a remarkable instance of retributive Providence. Tillotson, on leaving the University in 1657, went to reside in the family of Edmund Prideaux, Esq., of Ford Abbey in Devonshire, as tutor to his son. This gentleman had been commissioner of the great seal under the Long Parliament, and, when Tillotson went there, was attorney-general to Oliver the Protector. His pupil, twenty-eight years afterwards, engaged in the rebellion of the Duke of Monmouth. "The case of Mr. Prideaux is one of the many instances of the arbitrary temper of that government, which forced the nation into the Revolution; and the true circumstances of that case appear in the Journal of the House of Commons. He was seized and brought to London on the 19th of June, 1685, by a warrant from the Earl of Sunderland, secretary of state, dated the 13th, two days after the landing of the Duke of Monmouth at Lyme, and the same day on which the account of it was brought to the court at Whitehall, without being admitted to an examination, which he desired. He continued in custody of a messenger till the 14th of July following, when he was discharged by *Habeas Corpus*, giving security of £10,000 for his appearance the first day of the next term. Staying in London for that purpose, he was,

We pause to notice the effects produced by this continued violence and change, on the religion and morals of the country. Six years of civil warfare, which extended from Scotland to Cornwall, produced immense disorder and demoralization. The Restoration, followed by the rule of the two later Stuarts, was scarcely less mischievous. Continued proscription of political offenders, and the execution of great numbers in a manner which bore the character of judicial murder; incessant plots on the one hand, and grasping at arbitrary power on the other;—such acts, followed as they all were by the bloody tragedies of Jeffreys and Kirk, had a fearful influence on society.

James pursued a course of policy uniform in its spirit and tendency, its sole object being the full restoration of the Romish faith. For this purpose he made Tyrconnel, an Irish Papist, lord-lieutenant of Ireland, and caused him to re-model the Irish army, and officer it with Roman Catholics. Several members of that Church were sworn

on the 14th of September, again seized by a warrant of the Earl of Sunderland, and committed close prisoner to the Tower for high treason. While he was in this situation, a general inquiry was made by the agents of Lord Jeffreys,—advanced to the post of lord high chancellor on the 28th of that month,—amongst all the prisoners and condemned persons in the west, for an accusation against him; and threats and promises of life were employed to that end, that lord frequently declaring his resolution to hang him. The dread of this induced Mr. Prideaux to make application to the king by several persons; but receiving no other answer than that *His Majesty had given him to the lord chancellor, as a reward for his services in the west*, he at last agreed with his lordship for his pardon, after seven months' rigorous confinement, upon the payment of £15,000. These facts being proved to the House of Commons soon after the Revolution, a Bill was ordered in on the 1st of May, 1689, to charge the manors of Dolby in the Wolds and Neather Broughton, in Leicestershire, the estate of that lord, then deceased, with the repayment of £15,000, and interest, extorted by him from Mr. Prideaux."—BIRCH's "Life" of Archbishop Tillotson, Second Edition, pp. 15, 16.

members of the Privy Council. On summoning the Scottish Parliament, the king wrote them a letter, "recommending to their special care his innocent Roman Catholic subjects." All the measures of the court were directed to the same object, although nothing made the Reformed Church so aware of its danger as the forcible introduction, by royal authority, of Popish priests into the Universities. The act, however, which hastened the fate of this monarch, was his famous Declaration of liberty of conscience. It seems that, on the first issuing of this Declaration, its effect was in some measure neutralized, for want of its having sufficient publicity; the means of publication being at that time very scanty, and the remote parts of the country having but little communication with the capital. To remedy this defect, on the second publication of the Declaration, James issued an order of council, commanding it to be read in all the churches throughout the country before a certain day. The Archbishop of Canterbury, with six bishops, petitioned the king to be excused from complying with this demand. This petition was printed, and freely circulated in London; upon which these bishops were summoned before the council, sent to the Tower, and soon after tried at Westminster, when they were acquitted.

Abdication of James.

These circumstances led the nation to despair of maintaining religion, liberty, or peace, under James; and all eyes instinctively turned for deliverance to William Prince of Orange, who had married Mary, the eldest daughter of James. This prince was remarkable for courage, energy, and fortitude; he was an able military commander, and a thorough Protestant. All parties in England, with the exception of the Catholics, made overtures to him; and, having collected a fleet and army, he soon landed at Torbay. He came with sixty ships of war, eleven thousand

infantry, and four thousand five hundred cavalry; and first marched to Exeter, where he was joined by the gentry of Devon and Cornwall, and thence proceeded to Windsor. Meanwhile the army, the navy, the Church, and the people, simultaneously abandoned the infatuated king, who, finding himself without any support, sought refuge in France, and left a fair field for his successful rival.

The policy of William and Mary.

In consequence of the abdication of James, William and Mary were raised to the throne; but the nation did not repeat the blunder which it had made on the restoration of the Stuarts. Before offering the Prince of Orange the sceptre, both Houses waited on him and tendered a Declaration, asserting the rights and liberties of the people, which was received, formally passed through Parliament, and became law. By this measure, constitutional liberty was secured to the nation. The public purse was placed in charge of the Commons; the succession to the throne limited to Protestant princes; the censorship of the press was soon after abolished; and other alterations of a liberal character followed.

In the year which followed the arrival of William, an Act was passed which gave toleration to Protestant Dissenters, and at the same time lessened the severity of the penal code against the Catholics. Yet, notwithstanding the general *éclat* with which William and Mary were called to the throne, their accession made another division in the English Church. Many ministers belonging to the High Church party, regarding the hereditary right to the throne as divine and indefeasible, refused to take the oath of allegiance to William, and were consequently expelled from their offices and livings, under the name of Nonjurors. The archbishop of Canterbury, four bishops, and about fourteen hundred clergymen, suffered deprivation for

this cause; most of them being the very men who had refused to read King James's Declaration for general liberty of conscience, as it was insidiously called. These events placed the country in the civil, political, and religious position in which it was found at the origin of Methodism. A somewhat brighter era had then begun to dawn on the nation, and many pleasing advances had been made in the encouragement of true piety. But it must not be forgotten that, at the time when the father and mother of John and Charles Wesley were married, the Five-Mile Act was in full force, and more than five persons, beside the resident family, could not meet in any house to worship God, without exposing themselves to imprisonment or transportation. Anne ascended the throne at the death of William, in 1702. Her reign was distinguished by the military triumphs of Marlborough, but by no events of importance affecting the internal state of the country. George I., the son of Sophia of Hanover, (granddaughter of James I., and daughter of Elizabeth queen of Bohemia,) succeeded in 1714, on the death of Anne. The early part of his reign was disturbed by the efforts of the Pretender; but all these were defeated, and the constitution of the country was maintained as it had been established in 1688.

Nature and result of the prevalent religious influences.

Before we proceed more particularly to exhibit the religious condition of the country when Methodism was introduced, it is necessary that we should refer more directly to the religious influences which, during this period, were brought to bear on the people.

It cannot be doubted that the progress of the Reformation, even during the reign of Henry VIII., diffused much Gospel light throughout the land: and it is equally clear that this light was much increased during the brief reign

of his son and successor, Edward VI. The grand agency for effecting this important object must always be the preaching of the Gospel. We cannot do better, therefore, than insert here the masterly account given by Dr. Thomas Birch of the origin and progress of the true English sermon, which has been the admiration of all foreign divines:—

Origin and progress of the English sermon.

"The great improvements which [Tillotson] made in this important branch of public instruction, whereby Christianity has made a provision for spreading the principles of morality and religion, which had been omitted by the pagan legislators, and very insufficiently attempted by the philosophers of antiquity, will appear to those who consider the state of the pulpit at the time when he entered upon the function of a preacher. The whole form of the discourses there was oppressed with an unnecessary mixture of various languages, affected wit, and puerile rhetoric; and the general sense of the text was totally neglected, while every single word of it was separately considered under all its possible meanings. The history of preaching in our country and language, which cannot indeed be traced much higher than the Reformation, would show that from the beginning of the seventeenth century as false a taste had infected the pulpit as had prevailed after the corruption of the Roman eloquence, from the time of Seneca, till the Lower Empire; and the gravity and simplicity of style which distinguished the writers of the preceding age, were almost entirely lost till after the Restoration, when our author brought back both purity of language and force of reasoning. The reign of Henry VIII. produced two very learned divines,—Dr. Fisher, Bishop of Rochester, and Dr. Colet, Dean of St. Paul's; the former of whom has a few sermons, and the latter one, still extant, not contemptible for their style or argument. Those of

Dr. Latimer, Bishop of Worcester, are defective in dignity and elegance; his frank remonstrances to persons of the highest rank being delivered in expressions of peculiar levity, and intermixed with frequent stories unsuitable to the solemnity of the place and occasion. The Homilies drawn up under King Edward VI. are to be considered as a condescension to the capacities of the common people. In the long reign of his sister Elizabeth appeared several preachers who did honour to it: Jewel, Bishop of Salisbury; Whitgift, Archbishop of Canterbury; Sandys, Archbishop of York, whose sermons are perhaps superior to any of his contemporaries; and Hooker, author of the 'Ecclesiastical Polity.' But the great corruption of the oratory of the pulpit may be ascribed to Dr. Andrews, successively Bishop of Chichester, Ely, and Winchester, whose high reputation on other accounts gave a sanction to that vicious taste introduced by him several years before the death of Queen Elizabeth, one of his printed sermons being preached as early as 1588. The pedantry of King James the First's court completed the degeneracy of all true eloquence, so that the most applauded preachers of that time are now insupportable; and all the wit and learning of Dr. Donne cannot secure his sermons from universal neglect; and those of Hales of Eton are scarce ever read by the most zealous admirers of his other writings. Bishop Hall, of Exeter, like many other great men of that age, in this kind of composition sinks extremely below his own performances in all others, wherein he shows himself no ill copier of Seneca's sententious manner. Dr. Sanderson, afterwards Bishop of Lincoln, in the beginning of the reign of Charles I., furnished examples of a more easy and natural expression, and a greater connexion and propriety of argument, than the nation had for

many years been used to; and the few discourses remaining of Chillingworth are not unworthy of his character. But the volume of Dr. Jeremy Taylor, who began to distinguish himself about the time of that king's death, deserves much higher commendation for the copiousness of his invention, and the extent and beauty of his imagination, on which account he may be considered as the Barrow of an earlier date. But whoever is desirous of a compendious view of the various manners of preaching at that time, may consult a very ingenious imitation of them by Mr. Abraham Wright, fellow of St. John's College, in Oxford, and afterwards vicar of Okeham, in Rutlandshire, who, in 1657, published 'Five Sermons in Five several Styles or Ways of Preaching:' the first in that of Bishop Andrews; the second in that of Bishop Hall; the third in that of Dr. Jasper Mayne and Mr. Thomas Cartwright, two poets and dramatic writers as well as preachers; the fourth in that of the Presbyterians; and the fifth in that of the Independents." *

But it must be remembered, that the early Protestant discourses fell on the ears of those who had been brought up in the midnight ignorance of Popish superstitions; and further, that the Gospel had "free course" but for a very brief season. After struggling six years with the darkness and error engendered by ages of superstition, the light was extinguished, as far as possible, by bloody persecution. Again the word of God was proscribed, and a flood-tide of Popish error and influence passed over the country during the whole reign of Mary. With the accession of Elizabeth, Gospel truth was again preached; but, on the settlement of the English Church, not a few of the most pious and spiritually minded of the Protestants were excluded from

* "Life" of Archbishop Tillotson, Second Edition, p. 22.

her pulpits, because so many rites and usages, which they deemed remnants of Popery, were retained. Thus two fearful wrongs were perpetrated; elements of antichristian error were perpetuated, and the godly and conscientious followers of Christ were by these means excluded. Notwithstanding this fatal mistake, there was a large circulation of Gospel truth during this reign, which germinated and produced fruit during that and the following generations.

From the death of Charles to the Restoration, there was a still more effective ministration of the Gospel throughout the country. The churches were in very many places occupied by able, earnest, spiritually-minded men; and much was done to promote and establish a thoroughly Protestant feeling, and extend real religion among the people. The Restoration completely reversed this hopeful progress. Thousands of conscientious ministers were driven from the Church; all classes of Nonconformists were silenced, as far as the power of the crown could effect its object; and the Establishment was made an engine of state policy, and employed to further the arbitrary designs of the sovereign, to repress Protestant feeling, and to pave the way for the return of the nation to Popery.

For nearly a generation—during twenty-eight years—the people of England were in this state of retrogression. All the influences invested with power, and allowed freedom of action on the public mind, were malign in their tendency. The most zealous and effective preachers were silenced; the most pious of the people were prohibited from worshipping God according to their consciences. The religious services that were tolerated communicated the Gospel, as found in the Liturgy of the Church; but, although many eminently good men laboured to sustain and extend their influence, they were unable to quicken the inert mass. In numerous

cases, the truth of the ritual was obscured and disfigured by the tame, inefficient, and frequently erroneous teaching of the pulpit, and, perhaps more so, by unmeaning rites and usages; while every encouragement was given to immorality and profligate conduct. Indeed, all the influence of the court and aristocracy was exerted in this direction; and the whole course of policy and legislation was studiously designed to reduce all that was known of religion to a mere name and outward form.

It was in such circumstances, and under such influences, that the population grew up, which constituted the British nation at the close of the seventeenth and the beginning of the eighteenth century, and which included the parents of the Wesleys in its numbers. When William and Mary ascended the throne, and even during the reign of Anne, although the nation was disgusted with Popery, and turned away from it with loathing, it was not religious. Indeed, the people had little to do with what is called the great Revolution of 1688. This was almost exclusively the act of the aristocracy and the Church, who saw, in the arbitrary policy and Popish tendency of the Stuarts, danger to their interests. The masses of the people were grossly ignorant and fearfully irreligious.

Season of general prosperity.

Those who regard the spread of intelligence, and social and national progress, as signs of the advancement of religion, may reasonably doubt these statements. For it cannot be questioned, that this was a season in which this nation rose to great eminence. The martial prowess of William, although he was himself seldom successful as a general, had raised the name of England in the estimation of Europe, if it had not humbled the power of France. Both these objects were undoubtedly accomplished by the victories of Marlborough; and our country in consequence

took a position in the world such as she had never previously occupied.

In every department of science and literature, even greater progress had been made. Mathematics and astronomy had been enriched and extended by Wallis, Halley, Flamsteed, and Newton. Locke had employed his acute intellect on metaphysical philosophy, a region in which Bishop Berkeley had also become famous. In every branch of literature, men shone forth with dazzling brightness and in surprising numbers :—Wycherley, Congreve, Vanbrugh, Steele, and Farquhar, as dramatists; Addison, Swift, Prior, Rowe, Parnell, Garth, Gay, and Pope, as poets. Politics were discussed periodically by Davenant, Hare, Swift, Addison, and Bolingbroke. So that this has been commonly called the Augustan age of literature. But all this learned glory was not sufficient to make the nation religious, or to rescue it from a state of gross spiritual darkness and immorality. Progress in literature, science, and art.

It is so easy to make this charge against any age, that we fear lest in this instance its just and fearful weight should not be appreciated. The majority of the clergy were ignorant, worldly-minded, irreligious; many of them scandalized their profession by open immorality; and very few, even of the best of them, had correct views respecting the atoning sacrifice of Christ, or understood the nature of the great cardinal doctrine of the Reformation, justification by faith. If Tillotson, the amiable and eminent Archbishop of Canterbury, could so far forget himself, as to declare, in a sermon before the king, "that no man is obliged to preach against the religion of a country, though a false one, unless he has a power of working miracles,"*—thus passing condemnation on the whole band of Protestant Re-

* "Life of John Howe. By Dr. E. Calamy," p. 75.

formers; and if he could maintain that God had appointed, not only the rites and sacrifices of the Hebrew Church, but even the perfect atonement and intercession of the Son of God Himself, in compliance with the notions of the ancient heathen,* of whom it is said, they "changed the truth of God into a lie,"—what must have been the preaching of the ordinary clergy? The Dissenters had to a lamentable extent lost the piety and zeal of their Puritan forefathers, and were too generally sinking down into Arian error, lifeless formalism, or antinomian apathy.

Causes of ministerial inefficiency.

It is not difficult to account for this ministerial defection. For ten long years of peril and persecution, some of the best men that ever entered the Christian ministry were debarred from the exercise of all their functions, and were compelled to content themselves with attempts to benefit the world by their writings, in which they were eminently successful. When some beams of royal indulgence shone upon them in the latter part of Charles the Second's reign, they silently and cautiously improved their advantages, built meeting-houses, of which, till then, very few were to be seen in any part of the kingdom, and gathered together the scattered remains of their flocks. But they possessed no facilities for making aggression on the vices of society. After the Revolution of 1688, when their privileges were enlarged, some of the more youthful ministers engaged in unfruitful theories on sacred subjects, which brought many of them to adopt the Arian heresy. The Presbyterians could hold no synods or general assemblies; and consequently lost all the benefits derivable from mutual counsel and oversight, and from a strict periodical reference to their orthodox confession and formularies. Many of the Independent ministers, whose

* Tillotson's Works, vol. iv., p. 319. 1820.

creed repudiated all these needful helps, in a few years fell into the same fashionable profession of low Arianism. Both of these denominations in the time of George II. could number the Socinian pastors of their flocks by scores.

But though the Act of Uniformity inflicted a terrible blow on the Nonconformist interest, the absence of two thousand excellent pastors from active service in the Established Church proved to be a still greater evil to the Episcopalians themselves. Nearly two years before the arrival of St. Bartholomew's Day, Charles II. had by the Broad Seal, without any consultation with the bishops, introduced many hundreds of ministers into livings from which they had been sequestered during the Interregnum. Of those who were thus summarily reinstated, several had been ejected for vicious and scandalous conduct; and, during their forced suspension from the cure of souls, had not become proficients in virtue. When the vacancies on the episcopal bench had been all supplied, some of the right reverend prelates complained of the difficulties which they encountered in their several dioceses, while trying to fill up the places of the conscientious pastors who had just been ejected. Under these circumstances, they were compelled to accept the services of many unlearned and incompetent men as ministers of the sanctuary. From the Restoration till the time of George II. the character of the inferior clergy in the English Church had gradually deteriorated, and vast numbers were caught in the Arian snares artfully laid for them by the Whistons and Clarkes of that day. Nearly thirty years after the ejectment of the Nonconformists, when Dr. Tillotson had been elevated to the archiepiscopal see of Canterbury, His Grace "thought another book of Homilies, which should contain a full and plain account both of the doctrinal and practical parts of

the Christian religion, and give a clear explanation of everything relating to our holy faith, or to the conduct of our lives, was necessary CHIEFLY FOR THE INSTRUCTION OF THE CLERGY, and might also be a family book for the general use of the kingdom. He communicated this design to Bishop Burnet and Bishop Patrick;" both of whom, and Bishop Lloyd, approved highly of it, and agreed to take a share in its execution. Part of the plan was completed, and afterwards published in the form of five Homilies by Bishop Burnet. Some other dignitaries entered heartily into the project. "But," says Dr. Birch, "soon after this, they found a spirit of opposition growing so strong, and so much animated and supported, that it was to no purpose to struggle against it at that time. For which reason, this, with many other good designs, was reserved to a better opportunity." * This fact, and others of the same description, show the low state of religion at the time when the Wesleys and their brave coadjutors commenced their evangelical career.

How are these allegations to be proved to the perfect satisfaction of those who still doubt? One course is open, and a candid use of it ought to be decisive. There were, even in this season of religious darkness and immorality, eminent men both in the Church and among the Dissenters; men who, although not altogether free from the errors of the age, stood out as witnesses for the cause of truth and righteousness. They were perfectly informed respecting the morals and religion of the period. Let the most able, excellent, and godly ministers of all denominations be heard; let the testimony of these witnesses be taken; and a just conception may perhaps be obtained of the state of our country in this dark and fear-

* "Life" of Archbishop Tillotson, p. 469.

ful period of our national history. The following are a few testimonies of this kind.

Testimonies to the irreligion of the times.

Bishop Burnet says, "I am now in the seventieth year of my age; and as I cannot speak long in the world in any sort, so I cannot hope for a more solemn occasion than this of speaking with all due freedom, both to the present and to the succeeding ages. Therefore, I lay hold on it, to give a free vent to those sad thoughts that lie on my mind both day and night, and are the subject of many secret mournings. I dare appeal to that God to whom the secrets of my heart are known, and to whom I am shortly to give an account of my ministry, that I have the true interests of this Church ever before my eyes, and that I pursue them with a sincere and fervent zeal. If I am mistaken in the methods I follow, God, to whom the integrity of my heart is known, will not lay that to my charge. I cannot look on without the deepest concern, when I see the imminent ruin hanging over this Church, and, by consequence, over the whole Reformation. The outward state of things is black enough, God knows; but that which heightens my fears rises chiefly from the inward state into which we are unhappily fallen. I will, in examining this, confine myself to the clergy.

"Our Ember-weeks are the burden and grief of my life. The much greater part of those who come to be ordained are ignorant to a degree not to be apprehended by those who are not obliged to know it. The easiest part of knowledge is that to which they are the greatest strangers; I mean, the plainest part of the Scriptures, which they say, in excuse for their ignorance, that their tutors in the Universities never mention the reading of to them; so that they can give no account, or at least a very imperfect one, of the contents even of the Gospels. Those who have read

some few books, yet never seem to have read the Scriptures. Many cannot give a tolerable account even of the Catechism itself, how short and plain soever.

"This does often tear my heart. The case is not much better in many who, having got into orders, come for institution, and cannot make it appear that they have read the Scriptures or any one good book since they were ordained; so that the small measure of knowledge upon which they got into holy orders, not being improved, is in a way to be quite lost; and then they think it a great hardship if they are told they must know the Scriptures and the body of divinity better before they can be trusted with the care of souls."*

Bishop Gibson declares that "one, under pretence of opposing the encroachments of Popery, thereby to recommend himself to the unwary Protestant reader, has laboured at once to set aside all Christian ordinances, and the very being of a Christian ministry and a Christian Church. Another, under colour of great zeal for the Jewish dispensation, and the literal meaning of Scripture, has been endeavouring to overthrow the foundations of the Christian religion. A third, pretending to raise the actions and miracles of our Saviour to a more exalted and spiritual meaning, has laboured to take away the reality of them, and by that to destroy one of the principal evidences of Christianity. Others have shown a great zeal for natural religion, in opposition to revealed, with no other view, as it seems, than to get rid of the restraints of revealed religion, and to make way for unbounded enjoyment of their corrupt appetites and vicious inclinations, no less contrary, in reality, to the obligations of natural religion than of revealed. And all or most of these writers, under

* Bishop Burnet's "Pastoral Care," Third Edition, Preface.

colour of pleading for the liberties of mankind, have run into an unprecedented licentiousness, in treating the serious and important concerns of religion in a ludicrous and reproachful manner." *

Bishop Butler says, "It is come, I know not how, to be taken for granted by many persons, that Christianity is not so much as a subject of inquiry, but that it is now at length discovered to be fictitious; and, accordingly, they treat it as if, in the present age, this were an agreed point among all people of discernment; and nothing remained but to set it up as a principal subject of mirth and ridicule, as it were, by way of reprisals, for its having so long interrupted the pleasures of the world." †

Archbishop Secker observes that "men have always complained of their own times, and always with too much reason. But though it is natural to think those evils the greatest which we feel ourselves, and therefore mistakes are easily made in comparing one age with another; yet, in this we cannot be mistaken, that an open and professed disregard for religion is become, through a variety of unhappy causes, the distinguishing character of the present age: that this evil is grown to a great height in the metropolis of the nation; is daily spreading through every part of it; and, bad in itself as any can be, must of necessity bring in all others after it. Indeed, it hath already brought in such dissoluteness and contempt of principle in the higher part of the world, and such profligate intemperance and fearlessness of committing crimes in the lower, as must, if this torrent of impiety stop not, become absolutely fatal. And God knows, far from stopping, it

* Bishop Gibson's "Pastoral Letters," Second Edition, p. 2.

† Bishop Butler's Advertisement to the "Analogy," 1738.

receives, through the ill designs of some persons, and the inconsiderateness of others, a continual increase. Christianity is now ridiculed and railed at with very little reserve, and the teachers of it without any at all." *

Dr. John Guise declares, "The greatest number of preachers and hearers seem contented to lay Him (Christ) aside; and too many there are among us that set themselves against Him. His name is seldom heard of in conversation, unless in a way of strife and debate, or, which is infinitely worse, in a way of contempt, reproach, and blasphemy; and I am persuaded it never entered less than at this day into our practical godliness, into our solemn assemblies, into our dealing with God, into our dependencies on Him, expectations from Him, and devotedness to Him.

"All that is restrictively Christian, or that is peculiar to Christ, everything concerning Him that has not its apparent foundation in natural light, or that goes beyond its principles,—is waved, banished, and despised." †

So also Dr. Isaac Watts: "I am well satisfied that the great and general reason is, the decay of vital religion in the hearts and lives of men; and the little success which the ministrations of the Gospel have had of late for the conversion of sinners to holiness, and the recovery of them from the state of corrupt nature, and the course of this world, to the life of God by Jesus Christ.

"Nor is the complaint of the declension of virtue and piety made only by the Protestant Dissenters. It is a general matter of mournful observation amongst all that

* Archbishop Secker's "Eight Charges," p. 4. Edition of 1790.

† Dr. John Guise's "Twelve Sermons at Coward's Lecture," p. 26. Edition of 1729.

lay the cause of God to heart; and, therefore, it cannot be thought amiss for every one to use all just and proper efforts for *the recovery of dying religion in the world.*" *

The Rev. Abraham Taylor bears his testimony thus: "When any man, of a thoughtful, serious temper, considers the great decay of practical religion in this nation, and, at the same time, calls to mind the contempt which has been for many years cast on the Holy Spirit and His operations, he must readily conclude that this is the grand cause of the corruptions and abominations which abound among us." †

And Dr. Woodward thus expresses his judgment and his fears: "Whenever things are come to such extremity that the laws of God are trampled on with insolence and boasting, and the mysteries of our holy religion are made the scorn and laughter of profane men; if blasphemy and obscenity come into credit, and religion and virtue are pointed at as ridiculous; if it be thought a vain and mean thing to fear God, and to make serious mention of His name; if it even become unfashionable to praise our Infinite Benefactor at our tables, and to appear serious and devout in our churches; if the holy and tremendous name of the great and glorious God be not only vainly used, but vilely treated; His sacred day levelled in common with the rest, and His holy sacraments rejected by some and slighted by others; if these crying enormities are public and common, and there be no power or authority in Church or State put forth to stem or control them; such a nation or people will, without a miracle, first become a

* Dr. Isaac Watts's Preface to "An Humble Attempt toward the Revival of Practical Religion." Original Edition, 1731.

† Rev. Abraham Taylor's Preface to Hurrion's "Sermons on the Holy Spirit," p. 5. Edition of 1736.

horrible scene of atheism and impiety, and then of misery and desolation." *

A modern author, who will not be suspected of partiality, says, "Every writer who refers to the subject bears testimony to the prevalent infidelity of the age. It was to little purpose that the champions of the Church defended revelation against the attacks of sceptical writers; for it was not so much a spirit of rationalism, as of indifference and contempt, which pervaded society. Religious observances were openly derided; and no man who dreaded ridicule would venture, in polite company, to show any respect for sacred things. It was the evangelical doctrine which revived the fainting spirit of the ministry, and infused new vigour and vitality into all its members. Whether the constitution of the Church has been impaired by the vigour and vitality thus communicated to her is a question, the solution of which seems to be now in progress; but it is undeniable, I apprehend, that the interest of religion, the end and object of every ecclesiastical establishment, has been signally served by the remarkable movement which commenced about the middle of the eighteenth century." †

This case cannot be left to the judgment of the reader in more affecting and proper terms than in the following extract from the pen of an eminent living minister.

"Testimonies of a similar kind might be multiplied to an unlimited extent; but these may at present suffice. They furnish melancholy proof of the fearful prevalence of infidelity, and of profligacy of manners, among the irreli-

* Dr. Woodward's "Sermons preached at the Boyle Lecture," vol. ii., p. 546. Edition of 1739.

† "History of England during the Reign of George the Third. By William Massey, M.P.," vol. ii., p. 43.

gious part of the community; of the spread and withering influence of antichristian error among professing Christians; while the existing ministry in the length and breadth of the land, with some honourable exceptions, was comparatively powerless. Churchmen carried on, from year to year, the Boyle Lecture, in opposition to infidelity and scepticism; and the Lady Moyer Lecture, in defence of Christian orthodoxy. The Dissenters also established their Lectures at Salters' Hall, Berry Street, and Lime Street, against Popery and other forms of heterodox opinion which were rapidly gaining ground among them; and many of the lecturers discharged their duty with very superior zeal and ability. Yet, amidst all this effort, accompanied by the regrets of good men, on account of the declension of spiritual and practical religion, it is undeniable that 'iniquity abounded, and the love of many waxed cold.' The enemy triumphed, and Israel was faint-hearted." *

It will perhaps occur to the reader, that there are well known facts in the religious history of this period, which appear to militate against these statements and conclusions. It may, for instance, be urged, that some of the religious literature of that day was altogether opposed to the views here expressed; that very many devotional and theological works were then published; and that this circumstance of itself proves the existence of a wide-spread religious feeling; for otherwise such books would not have found a market.

This objection, however, plausible as it appears, would, if our limits allowed its full discussion, only confirm and establish the opinions previously advanced. There was evidently, to some considerable extent, at this time, a spirit of inquiry, and a felt religious want, which caused the

* Rev. Thomas Jackson's "Centenary of Methodism," p. 23.

circulation of the works referred to. But how did these religious works meet and direct it? Almost without exception, they were imbued with philosophical Arianism on the one hand, or with mystical theology on the other. Those who thought of God and felt after Him, were either taught to explain away the great doctrine of atonement, or led to seek the attainment of salvation through isolation from the world, or in labours, watchings, mortifications, and sufferings. In a word, there was a fearful lack of really religious teaching, and the little that did exist was communicated in a manner least likely to lead sinners to salvation.

It is not necessary to proceed further with this inquiry. Enough has been adduced to show that England, having passed through a series of political and religious revolutions, was, according to the concurrent testimony of all history, and in the judgment of the most eminent divines of all denominations in the early part of the eighteenth century, awfully irreligious. The state of court morals at this time was as bad, if not worse, than in the worst days of Charles II.; and the moral condition of the population at large was still lower. Although mightily improving in all the elements of national prosperity and power, increasing in population and wealth, advancing in learning, literature, and science, the British nation, in morals and religion, was in a state of fearful darkness and depression.

Nor was a clear perception of this painful truth, or a gloomy foreboding of its too probable consequences, confined to divines, or professed only by religious writers. These thoughts and fears were entertained by many others who dreaded the results of the unblushing infidelity and practical ungodliness which had gained such fearful prevalence. One singular instance of this is found in a

beautifully delicate compliment paid by a contemporary poet to Addison, on account of the moral tendency of his contributions to the "Spectator," and in allusion to the signatures which he attached to these pieces.

> "When panting Virtue her last efforts made,
> You brought your CLIO to the virgin's aid."

The virtue of Britain is represented at this time as *in a dying state*, as *at the last gasp:* but could the moral essays of Addison, beautiful, chaste, and elevating as they were, save her? No! All their power, brilliance, and energy were utterly inadequate. Nothing but the pure truth of God, sown broad-cast over the country, and applied to the conscience of the people by the Holy Spirit, could meet the case, and save England from spiritual death and moral putrefaction. The virtue of Britain must have panted and perished, if some active, general, and directly religious agency had not been brought to bear on the public mind: but such an agency it pleased the good providence of God at this season to provide. Yet the moral and religious writers of the day seemed ignorant of this inefficiency; and this fact affords the clearest proof of the state of religious knowledge and opinion.

CHAPTER II.

THE FATHERS AND FAMILY OF THE WESLEYS.

Origin of the Westley family.

VARIOUS opinions have been entertained as to the origin of the Westley family. Dr. A. Clarke regards it as a very probable conjecture, that it came from Spain, and that the name is derived from the Arabic, a language which prevailed for a long time in that country.* The Rev. William Beal, with greater probability, believes it to have descended from the ancient Saxons.† One thing at least is certain, that the family was ancient and of high respectability in the south of England.

The great-grandfather of John and Charles Wesley was a clergyman of Dorsetshire, and Mr. Beal has shown that there are unquestionable memorials of a family of this name in that county, as early as the fourteenth century. Camden intimates that surnames were not in general use in England until about this time; and that persons were previously often distinguished by the place of their residence, and this designation generally became the family name. There were in the county of Dorset certain portions of land formerly called "*hides, vils,* (fields,) and *manors,* distinguished by the names, Wantesleigh, Wynesleigh, Wansley, and Westly." ‡ Hutchins, the historian of Dorsetshire, says, there is "a hamlet in Broadwindsor called Wansley, Wantsley, Wantsleigh, and Wanslew;" and that there are twenty acres of land in Hook called West Leas.§

* "The Wesley Family," vol. i., p. 3.

† "Wesley Fathers," p. 4. ‡ *Ibid.*, p. 5.

§ Quoted in DR. A. CLARKE'S "Wesley Family," p. 1.

This latter statement probably affords a key to the whole case. *Lea* in Saxon signifies a place, and in English an enclosed piece of cultivated or pasture land. Such a place, designated by its bearing, would be called Westlea, and might have given the original of the name under consideration. Certain it is, that we read of John de Wyntereslegh, who was vicar of Frampton, 1363; George Westley, treasurer of Sarum, 1403; prebendary of Bedminster and Radeclyve, 1404; John Westley, Batchelor in Degrees, rector of Langton Matravers, 1481; John Wannesleigh, rector of Bettiscomb, 1497; and John Wennesley, chaplain of Pillesdon, 1508.* As these persons and places are found in the same county, and even in the neighbourhood which afterward was the residence of the great-grandfather of John Wesley, and as the father of the founder of Methodism, when he entered at Oxford, signed his name Samuel Westley, it can scarcely be doubted that we have in some of these clergymen the ancestors of this family. It is not, however, necessary to pursue this inquiry further into the regions of conjecture. All the evidence on the subject seems to support Dr. Whitehead's assertion, that Wesley's ancestors were "respectable for learning, conspicuous for piety, and firmly attached to those views of Christianity which they had formed from the holy Scriptures." †

Bartholomew Westley. His conduct perils the safety of Charles II.

The first of these ancestors whom it is necessary to notice particularly, was Bartholomew Westley. He was born about 1595, or between that year and 1600, and was educated at one of the universities, where he studied physic as well as divinity,—a practice which prevailed in preceding

* Dr. Clarke's "Wesley Family," vol. i., p. 1; and Beal's "Wesley Fathers," p. 5.

† "Life of Rev. J. Wesley," p. 1.

ages, and which, from this instance, is known not to have been entirely abandoned in his time. In the year 1640,* Bartholomew Westley was presented to the rectory of Charmouth, and ten years later (1650) to that of Catherston. These parishes adjoin each other, and are in the south-western extremity of Dorsetshire. Charmouth is on the great western road between Bridport and Axminster, and about two miles from Lyme. From these facts it appears, that this minister entered on his career of public duty during the reign of Charles I.; and as the living of Catherston was given him the year after that king was beheaded, it may be fairly presumed that his religious views were not very dissimilar to those of the party which established the Commonwealth. The subsequent events of his life remove all doubt on this subject.

It has been reported, that when Charles II. was endeavouring to escape out of the kingdom after his defeat at the battle of Worcester, he very nearly incurred detection and arrest through the means of this clergyman.†

The substance of this account is as follows. After the battle of Worcester, in 1651, the king lay concealed at Trent, near Sherborne, in the house of Colonel Wyndham. This gentleman employed a friend to procure some vessel on the coast, to take the royal fugitive across the Channel. A Captain William Ellesdon, of Lyme, engaged a tenant

* Beal's "Wesley Fathers," p. 27.

† Anthony à Wood, "*Athenæ Oxonienses*," vol. ii., col. 963.—Dr. Clarke, having examined this allegation at some length, decided that it was altogether inapplicable to Mr. Bartholomew Westley, and should be attributed partly to the mistake, and partly to the invention, of the author. Mr. Beal, however, having consulted Mrs. Wyndham's narrative of the escape of Charles, ("Boscobel Tracts,") to which Dr. Clarke alludes, though he does not appear to have seen it, has arrived at a very different conclusion, and one which seems to be fully established by facts.

of his, Stephen Limbry, to convey the king and two or three of his friends to France, for the sum of sixty pounds. The representation was, that these persons, being attached to the royal cause, wished to leave the country privately. It was therefore arranged that the vessel was to be near Charmouth road on the night of the 22nd of September; and on the evening of that day, when sufficiently dark, the long-boat was to be sent to take the colonel and his friends from the beach to the vessel, which would then sail immediately for France. The business being thus far successfully planned, the next step was to secure rooms at the inn, from which the party might go at pleasure without exciting suspicion. This was done by sending a servant thither, who told the landlady that he wanted the best rooms in the house for a wedding party; but that, as the lady's friends were violently opposed to the match, it was necessary that everything should be arranged with the greatest secresy, so that the party might travel through the night, or leave very early in the morning, as might be found necessary. This, too, was fully arranged; and at the appointed time the king set out on horseback, riding before Mrs. Julian Coningsby, Mrs. Wyndham's niece: Colonel Wyndham was the guide; Lord Wilmot, and Peters, the servant who had hired the rooms at the inn, followed. They safely reached the house, and Limbry assured them that all things were prepared, and that his boat should be at the appointed place at midnight. At the specified time, the colonel went to the beach, but waited all night in vain, —no boat appeared. At daybreak he returned to the inn, and urged the immediate escape of the king, who instantly departed as he had come.

It was afterwards discovered that on that very day the Proclamation of the Parliament, denouncing the conse-

quences of concealing the king, or any of his party, had been published at Lyme. The substance of this proclamation reached the ears of the wife of Captain Limbry, who, from the secresy and haste manifested by the party which her husband had engaged to take to France, shrewdly suspected they might be connected with the royalist cause; and fearing the engagement would bring her husband into trouble and danger, she determined to prevent its accomplishment. Mrs. Limbry accordingly took her measures quietly and cautiously; and perceiving her husband go into his bedchamber for some linen for the voyage, she promptly locked him in, nor could anything he said alter her purpose: there he was kept, and the king was in consequence left without the means of escape.

While, however, Lord Wilmot was endeavouring to get some explanation of this terrible disappointment, he ordered the hostler of the inn to get his horse shod, for which purpose the horse was taken to a smith of the name of Hamnet, who, on looking at the horse's shoes, declared they were not made in the west of England, but in the north. The hostler, on hearing this remark, said, that the party had sat up, and the horses been kept saddled, all night. These facts being taken in connexion with the Proclamation, it was immediately concluded that either the king, or some persons of dignity connected with his cause, had been at Charmouth; and the hostler, impressed with the importance of this notion, hastened to the clergyman, Mr. Westley, who is called the "fanatical minister," to inform him of these circumstances. It so happened that the parson was then at his morning devotions, and continued so long thus engaged, that the hostler, fearing he should lose his fee, hastened back to the inn, saw Lord Wilmot off, and then returned to Mr. Westley, and told

him the tale of these strange visitors. Mr. Westley, having made inquiries of the woman at the inn, then went with Hamnet to a Mr. Butler of Commer, a justice of the peace, to give him information, that warrants might be issued for the apprehension of these suspicious persons. No warrants were issued; but Captain Massey raised a party, and pursued the strangers on the London road as far as Dorchester. But the king escaped, having turned aside on the road to Broadwindsor.*

The whole of this case has been canvassed with the greatest earnestness, as though it involved some serious charge against Mr. Bartholomew Westley. But for this notion there is no foundation whatever. A report was brought to the minister, of some very suspicious persons having been in the neighbourhood, the day after a Proclamation had been published by the existing government, and in a time of great public disquiet. He inquired into the truth of this report, and informed the nearest magistrate of the fact. As Mr. Beal pertinently inquires, "Could he in these circumstances have done less?" And, having done this, he appears to have taken no further interest in the case. Great, but altogether needless, efforts have been made to clear Mr. Westley of any disloyal feeling on this occasion; although it cannot be doubted that he sympathized with the Puritans, and could not consequently be a zealous supporter of the Stuarts.

Ejected from Catherston and Charmouth.

This minister was ejected from his livings of Catherston and Charmouth very soon after the Restoration. That this event took place before the general expulsion on St. Bartholomew's Day, is proved by the date of his successor's induction, which was March 4th, 1662; the general ejection

* Beal's "Wesley Fathers," p. 35.

being enforced on August 24th of the same year. From this circumstance it has been argued, that some special reason existed for his early expulsion from these two small livings. But there is no necessity for such an inference. For many years after the Restoration, no allusion was made to Mr. Westley's share in the transactions connected with the flight of Charles II. from "Worcester field;" and no particular reason was ever assigned for his extrusion. The late date of his successor's induction would induce one to conclude, that he was more favoured than hundreds of the inferior clergy, who, immediately after His Majesty's accession, were driven from their livings, without distinction either of persons or offences, but solely in virtue of the king's mandate. This is a fact of which all our historians are cognizant; and it will be best understood from the following extract. In September, 1660, several distinguished pastors of the Presbyterian denomination were in frequent personal communication with his majesty and some of his ministers respecting the affairs of their body, only a few months after the Restoration. Baxter was one of them, and says, "*Before this time*, by the king's return, many hundred worthy ministers were displaced and cast out of their charges, because they were in sequestrations *where others by the Parliament had been cast out.* Our earnest desires had been, that all such should be cast out as were in any benefice belonging formerly to a man that was NOT grossly insufficient and debauched; but that all that succeeded *such as these scandalous ones* should hold their places. But these wishes being vain, and all the old ones restored, the king promised that the places where any of *the old ones were dead*, should be confirmed to the possessors. But many got the Broad Seal for them: and the matter was not great; for

we were all of us to be endured but a little longer."* Having this cheap and ready method of gratifying those who called themselves his injured friends, the jovial monarch distributed benefices without discrimination; and many of "the scandalous ones" were quickly re-instated in their former places. But when the patrons of those livings and the restored bishops became acquainted with these royal doings, they complained loudly of his infringing on their rights; and their remonstrances had the effect of checking such irregular proceedings. Yet ejectments did not at that time entirely cease; for, during several subsequent months, an incumbent was occasionally dismissed in a summary manner; but it was done *orderly*, at the recommendation or with the approval of the bishop and patron, till the arrival of St. Bartholomew's Day; when the rest complied with the command to quit their churches, because they could not in conscience conform.

On the other hand, it is likely that such an important crisis in the king's history, as his escape from Charmouth, would, after the Restoration, be recalled in all its circumstances.† Colonel Wyndham and Mrs. Lane each received £1,000 for the services they rendered His Majesty in regard to his escape; and it is quite possible that a poor, pious, and probably puritanical clergyman, who had taken means which might have led to the king's apprehension, would incur special notice and persecution.

It may be necessary to strengthen the assertion that Bartholomew Westley was ejected from Catherston and Charmouth, as almost all John Wesley's biographers state that he was ejected from Arlington.

The cause of this error was the entry by Dr. Calamy, in

* Baxter's "Life," by SYLVESTER, folio, p. 241.

† For an amusing illustration, see Appendix B, at the end of this volume.

his Continuation of "Baxter's Life and Times," of this passage: "Mr. Bartholomew Westley.—I have been informed that this Mr. Westley was ejected from Arlington, and that Mr. Burd was ejected at Charmouth." * But in the same volume, page 437, the error is corrected; and it is said, "This Mr. John Westley (of Whitchurch) was the son of Mr. Bartholomew Westley of Charmouth, and father of Mr. Samuel Westley, rector of Epworth." Palmer quoted the first report of Dr. Calamy, in the first edition of his "Nonconformists' Memorial," thus: "*Arlington. —Mr. Bartholomew Westley having applied himself to the study of physic as well as divinity, while in the university," &c.; but marked it with an asterisk, to point it out as doubtful; and in the second edition of the work completely corrected the error. When Dr. Whitehead wrote his "Life of Wesley," he quoted this erroneous passage from the first edition of the "Nonconformists' Memorial," as he distinctly states; and he having been followed by all the other biographers, the misstatement has been perpetuated.

Having thus shown the cause of the error, it may be necessary to prove the statement, that Bartholomew Westley was certainly minister of Catherston and Charmouth. This is easily done. In 1649, Whitelocke, Keeble, and Lisle were appointed lords commissioners of the great seal. In the same year they were ordered "to inquire into the yearly value of all ecclesiastical livings, to which any cure of souls was annexed; to certify to the Court of Chancery the names of the incumbents who supplied the cure, and their respective salaries." This return is preserved. From it the following extracts are given respecting Bartholomew Westley.

* Edition of 1713, p. 429.

"CATHERSTON.

"Bartholomew Westley's glebe, five acres, worth £3. 10*s.*; his small tithes, £10; in all, £13. 10*s.*

"CHARMOUTH.

"Bartholomew Westley, the present possessor by sequestration. The house and four acres of glebe are worth, *per annum*, £4; the tithes of the parish, £18. They desire Catherston may continue annexed, as it was by order of the committee of the county." *

This entirely settles the question as to the ministerial location of Bartholomew Westley. The return was made in 1650.

Little is known of the subsequent life of this ejected minister. It is stated that, after his expulsion from the Church, he supported himself by practising physic, which he had studied at the university in his youth. He was an outcast, persecuted, and oppressed, not allowed by the atrocious laws then in force to come within five miles of any place in which he had exercised his ministry, or of any borough town. Yet he maintained his reputation to the last; and was, says Dr. Calamy, "when an old man, and the vigour of life was gone, as tender-hearted and affectionate, as he had been pious and prudent." He lived to see his son sink into the grave, a victim of pitiless intolerance, but survived him only a very short time: that event, as Dr. Southey truly says, "brought his grey hairs with sorrow to the grave."

John Westley educated at Oxford.

John Westley, the son of the preceding, and the grandfather of the founder of Methodism, was born about 1636, and educated at New Inn Hall, Oxford, where he was dis-

* BEAL'S "Biographical Notices of the Rev. Bartholomew Westley," &c., p. 9.

tinguished for piety and diligence, but more particularly for the successful study of the oriental languages. It was his happiness to be at Oxford some time after Dr. John Owen had reformed and improved the university. The effects of anarchy and civil war on this seat of learning were so fearful, that it is said, "The colleges and halls had gone to ruin; five of them were perfectly deserted; some were converted into magazines, and the rest were in a most shattered state; while the chambers were filled with officers and soldiers, or let out to townsmen. There was little or no education of youth; poverty, desolation, and plunder—the sad effects of war—were to be seen in every corner." While the university was in this state, Dr. Owen was appointed vice-chancellor by Cromwell, in 1652. To correct existing evils, to "curb the licentiousness of the students, to maintain the rights of the university, and to support its claims to the character of piety and learning, the vice-chancellor, says his biographer, set himself vigorously; and he most happily succeeded." * The successful progress of young Westley attracted the attention and secured the respect of the vice-chancellor, for whom the student also entertained the highest regard. Thomas Goodwin, Stephen Charnock, Theophilus Gale, and John Howe, were at Oxford at the same time as John Westley.

At Melcombe and Radipole.

Having acquitted himself honourably, and taken his degree, he left the university, and is next heard of as a member of "a particular church at Melcombe in Dorsetshire," by which he was sent to preach among the seamen, and at Radipole, a village about two miles from Weymouth. This, his first appointment, was simply a commission to preach the Gospel. No church was then placed under his care, nor was he charged with the administration of the

* Beal's "Fathers of the Wesley Family," p. 55.

sacraments. On the death of Mr. Walton, 1658, Mr. Westley became the minister of Winterborne Whitchurch. He was invited by the people to this office, and, having been appointed by the trustees to the parish, received in due time the approval of the "triers."*

Minister of Winterborne Whitchurch.

The records which have been preserved of this minister and his times, afford evidence of his piety, unquestionably the most eminent qualification for the sacred office, beyond any thing which even such an examination and approval can afford. He was carefully and religiously trained, and gave his heart to the Lord in his youth. When a lad at school, he was deeply convinced of sin, and had a serious concern for his salvation; and soon after God began to work on his soul, he kept a diary, in which he recorded not only the most remarkable events of Providence as they affected his temporal circumstances, but, more especially, the operations of the Spirit of grace on his soul. This practice, it is said, he continued with little interruption to the end of his life.

Fifteen months after John Westley began his ministry at Whitchurch, Oliver Cromwell died at Whitehall; and, within a short time, Charles II. was restored to the crown.

* These "triers" were appointed by Cromwell to examine every person "presented, nominated, chosen, or appointed, to any benefice with care of souls, or to any public settled lecture in England or Wales." Their instructions required them to judge whether they could approve every such person, for "the grace of God in him, his holy and unblameable conversation, as also for his knowledge and utterance, able and fit to preach the Gospel." Five of these commissioners were sufficient to approve a minister, but not less than nine could reject a man who had been appointed. To those whom they approved, the "triers" gave an instrument in writing under a common seal, by which they were put into as full possession of the living to which they had been nominated or chosen, as if they had been admitted by institution and induction. It was thus that John Westley was placed in the living of Winterborne Whitchurch.

This event was mainly brought about by the assurance which Charles gave in his Declaration, and sent to this country from Breda, "that no man shall be disquieted, or called in question, for differences of opinion, which do not disturb the peace of the kingdom," as noticed in the preceding chapter.

Is persecuted at the Restoration.

As we have already shown, this assurance soon became a dead letter; but the zealous advocates of the new order of things, and the enemies of Mr. Westley, could not allow him to minister in peace even until the law interfered, which, from the date of the Restoration, it threatened to do. Some persons made a very unfavourable report of him to Gilbert Ironside, Bishop of Bristol, which led to an interview between the young minister and the prelate, during which, in a long conversation, (which has been preserved, and many times printed,) the bishop questioned him as to the manner of his ordination, and insisted on the necessity of his submitting to the forms prescribed by the Church of England. Mr. Westley defended himself with such singular ability, modesty, and temper, that the candid prelate dismissed him, saying, "I will not meddle with you; farewell, good Mr. Westley."

Notwithstanding this forbearance on the part of the bishop, the good man was soon afterward imprisoned, and after a while discharged by an order of Privy Council, dated July 24th, 1661, and directed to take the oaths of supremacy and allegiance. He was again seized as he was coming out of the church, in the early part of 1662, carried to Blandford, and then committed to prison. He was not, however, kept long in confinement: for Sir Gerard Napper, the leading magistrate of the county, although he had been one of his bitterest enemies, and the most forward in committing him, was so softened in his feeling

toward the pious young minister, through severe personal affliction, that he declared, if no other person would offer bail for him, he would do it himself. Mr. Westley was accordingly discharged. The magistrate before whom he appeared for the purpose of taking the appointed oaths declined to administer them, but issued a warrant directing him to attend before the judges of the assizes to be held at Dorchester on the 1st of August following. He duly appeared at the appointed time and place, and, notwithstanding the austere character of the judge, was treated kindly, and the decision on the case was deferred.

He refuses to comply with the Act of Uniformity.

There was, however, no need for any further appearance; for the 24th of the ensuing August was the day appointed for carrying into effect the Act of Uniformity, which required ministers not only to use the Book of Common Prayer, but also to declare their "unfeigned assent and consent to all and everything contained therein." Mr. Westley had fully determined never to comply with these requirements; so he preached to his people with the greatest diligence and affection until Sunday, August 17th, when he took leave of them in an earnest discourse on Acts xx. 32: "And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them that are sanctified." Thus the weeping congregation heard their minister for the last time. On the 26th of October an apparitor declared the place to be vacant, and orders were given to sequester the profits.

The future career of this pious victim of cruel persecution is of too painful a character to be given in detail. A brief sketch will suffice. In February, 1663, he quitted Whitchurch, and removed his family to Melcombe; the corporation of that town prohibited his residence there,

and imposed a fine of £20 on the landlady, and 5*s.* a week on him, to be levied by distress. He exerted himself to the utmost to avert the execution of this cruel mandate, but in vain; another order was issued on the 11th of the following month for enforcing the preceding one, and he was driven from the town. Mr. Westley subsequently sought shelter successively in Ilminster, Bridgewater, and Taunton, and was everywhere treated with great kindness by the three dissenting denominations, who afforded him numerous opportunities for preaching, and who ministered to his necessities, which his numerous family must have made very great. At length, after wandering in this way for some time, a benevolent gentleman gave him leave to reside, rent free, in a good house in the village of Preston, about three miles from Weymouth. He repaired to this place in May, 1663, his heart overflowing with gratitude to God that he had once more a home, while so many of his brethren in the ministry were wandering and desolate.

The victim of incessant persecution.

After two years, he was driven from this refuge by the notorious "Five Mile Act," which prohibited any ejected minister from residing within five miles of any borough town; and as Preston was only three miles from Weymouth, he had to leave his home, and again become a wanderer and an outcast.*

* It is a fact worthy of being remembered, that the Earl of Clarendon, who was the great promoter of this inhuman measure, and who mainly carried it through the Parliament which sat at Oxford, was soon after not only discarded by his political friends, and driven from the country, but is said to have declared, whilst in banishment in France, that he never was in favour since the Parliament sat at Oxford. Thus the fall of this great statesman began with the consummation of this act of tyranny. No sooner had he placed in the hands of an unprincipled sovereign the means of silencing, and sending forth homeless on the world, thousands of the ministers of Christ, than that prince withdrew fro n him his favour, and soon after sent him into banishment. "Verily there is a God that judgeth in the earth."

From this period to the time of his death, Mr. Westley suffered incessant persecution. At first he contemplated emigrating to America; but it is supposed the expense of removing his large family so great a distance rendered this impracticable. For a while he had very serious struggles in his mind whether he should preach openly or secretly; but at length he adopted the latter course, and in consequence remained at large and was useful long after those who had set the law at defiance were shut up in gaol. After some time he had a call from a body of Christians at Poole to become their pastor, so far as this could be done in such times. He complied; and, to avoid the operation of the "Five Mile Act," placed his family in that town, while he resided principally in the country. Yet, although he conducted his religious meetings with the greatest prudence and secresy, he was several times apprehended, and four times imprisoned,—once for six months, and another time for three months. Notwithstanding, he continued to labour, subject to these interruptions and injuries, until his spirit and physical energy sank beneath his sufferings, and he fell into a premature grave.

His death.

The date of his death is not known, but it is supposed to have been about 1670. Dr. Calamy is almost the only author who has written respecting him; and he clearly proves that John Westley of Whitchurch was an able divine, fully versed in the controversy between the Established Church and the Puritans, and an ingenuous, conscientious Christian, endowed with firmness to endure anything, rather than depart from what he believed to be the truth.

Mr. John Westley had a numerous family; but no information has been preserved respecting any of them, except Matthew and Samuel. The first was a surgeon or physician,

Matthew Westley a surgeon.

and practised in London. He visited his brother's family at Epworth in the year 1731, and died in 1737.

Samuel Westley: his education.

Samuel Westley, the other son, was born about the year 1666. His education began at the free school, Dorchester, and was continued under the learned Edmund Veal, one of the Bartholomew confessors, who at that time kept an eminent dissenting academy at Stepney; whence he removed to another academy at Newington Green, kept by Mr. Charles Morton. Of this school the celebrated Daniel De Foe, who was educated there, speaks as follows: "There was, some years ago, a private academy of Dissenters not far from London, the master of which read all his lectures, gave all his systems,—whether of philosophy or divinity,—in English. And though the scholars were not destitute in the languages, yet they were made masters of the English tongue; and more of them excelled in that particular than of any school of that time. Here was produced, of Ministers, Mr. Timothy Crusoe,* Mr. Hannot, Mr. Nathaniel Taylor, Mr. Owen, Mr. Obadiah Marriott, Mr. John Shower, and several others; and of another kind, poets, Samuel Westley, Daniel De Foe, and two or three of your western martyrs, that, had they lived, would have been extraordinary men of their kind; namely, Kitt, Battersby, Young, Jenkins, Hewling, and many more." †

Leaves the Dissenters, goes to Oxford, and joins the Church.

Thus far we see Samuel Westley taught and trained in all the doctrines and practices of the Dissenters of his day. The persecution which his father suffered was not likely to render his spirit more favourable to the Church which so grievously oppressed him. Yet soon afterward he is

* It will not escape the attentive reader here, that one of the most eminent of De Foe's schoolfellows in this academy was called *Crusoe*, the name which he gave to the hero of his celebrated romance.

† De Foe's "Present State of Parties," pp. 316–320.

found at Oxford, where he appeared to be, what he ever after remained, a consistent Churchman. This change forms a subject of great interest. His son, the founder of Methodism, has given the following account of this important event in his father's history: "Some severe invectives being written against the Dissenters, Mr. Samuel Westley, being a young man of considerable talents, was pitched upon to answer them. This set him on a course of reading, which soon produced an effect very different from what had been intended. Instead of writing the wished-for answer, he himself conceived that he saw reason to change his opinions; and actually formed a resolution to renounce the Dissenters, and attach himself to the Established Church. He lived at that time with a mother and an old aunt, both of whom were too strongly devoted to the dissenting doctrines to have borne with any patience the disclosure of his design. He therefore got up one morning at a very early hour, and, without acquainting any one with his purpose, set out on foot to Oxford, and entered himself of Exeter College." At this time he was about seventeen years of age, and had only £2. 16*s.* in his possession, and no prospect of any future supplies, except by his own exertions. Yet he succeeded in supporting himself, it is supposed, principally by aiding younger students, and instructing any who chose to employ him: so that although all the assistance he received from his friends was 5*s.*, he was enabled not only to maintain himself, but on taking his Bachelor's degree he went to London with £10. 15*s.* in his possession. No clearer proof can be given of his having been a young man of much decision of character, unwearied diligence, and great ability.

The family name.

Hitherto in the preceding pages the family name has been written "Westley." It was so written by eminent

authors contemporary with the Westley fathers, such as Baxter, Dr. Bates, Dr. Calamy, the authors of the "Boscobel Tracts," Hutchins, Wood, &c. It was so written by the fathers themselves, Bartholomew of Charmouth, John of Whitchurch, and Samuel, when he entered at Oxford; and even when the last-named was incorporated at Cambridge, the record stands thus:—

"INCORPORATED, 1694,

SAM. WESTLEY, A.B., COLL. EXON., OX.

SAMUEL WESTLEY, A.M., COLL. C. C., CAM., 1694."*

But, as far as has been ascertained, this orthography was never used after he was rector of Epworth. Some persons have supposed that he wished to obliterate this evidence of his connexion with an eminent dissenting family. It is, however, vain to speculate: the fact is undoubted, that prior to this period the name was generally spelt "Westley;" and afterward, that it was as usually written "Wesley." The latter form has now become universal.

Although Mr. Wesley had graduated at Oxford, he does not at the time of leaving college seem to have fully made up his mind as to his future course. He tells us, that at this time his acquaintance lay chiefly among the Dissenters, having scarcely any intimacy with members of the Church of England, except with two clergymen who were his relations. He was ordained deacon, and obtained a curacy of £28 a year. After the expiration of this engagement, he was appointed chaplain on board a ship of war, where he had £70 for one year's service. He then came to London, and obtained a curacy of £30 a year, which he held for two years.

Samuel Wesley's ordination and early ministerial career.

During this time he married Susanna, the youngest daughter of Dr. Samuel Annesley, respecting whom and

* DR. SOUTHEY'S "Letter to Rev. William Beal," Dec. 28th, 1835.

her father some further information will be given hereafter. Samuel, his eldest son, appears to have been born during his second curacy in London; at which time, also, James II. insisted on his famous "Declaration" being read in all the churches, as, it was generally believed, a means to the introduction of Popery. Mr. Wesley, being now universally regarded as a young man of great spirit and ability, was applied to by the court party with promises of preferment, and solicited to support the measures of the sovereign. But the young minister was proof against this seductive influence; and rose in bold resistance to the daring aggression on Gospel liberty which the schemes of the court involved. Surrounded by courtiers and soldiers, he refused to read the Declaration, and preached a bold and pointed discourse against it, from Dan. iii. 17, 18: "If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and He will deliver us out of thine hand, O king. But if not, be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up." His son Samuel, who would have a knowledge of all the particulars from his father, describes this circumstance in the following spirited lines:—

Noble resistance of court influence.

"When zealous James, unhappy, sought the way
To' establish Rome by arbitrary sway;
In vain were bribes shower'd by the guilty crown:
He sought no favour, as he fear'd no frown.
Secure in faith, exempt from worldly views,
He dared the Declaration to refuse:
Then from the sacred pulpit boldly show'd
The dauntless Hebrews, true to Israel's God,
Who spake, regardless of their king's commands,
'The God we serve can save us from thy hands;
If not, O monarch, know, we choose to die,
Thy gods alike and threatenings we defy;

No power on earth our faith has e'er controlled;
We scorn to worship idols, though of gold.'
Resistless truth damp'd all the audience round,
The base informer sicken'd at the sound;
Attentive courtiers conscious stood amazed,
And soldiers silent trembled as they gazed.
No smallest murmur of distaste arose,
Abash'd and vanquish'd seem'd the Church's foes.
So, when like zeal their bosoms did inspire,
The Jewish martyrs walk'd unhurt in fire." *

The Athenian Society.

Prior to this period, Mr. Wesley had attained some distinction as an author, and especially as a member of the Athenian Society. The original articles of agreement by which this literary body was constituted, are still preserved in the Bodleian Library, executed by these three persons: Samuel Wesley, Clerk; Richard Sault, Gent.; John Dunton, Bookseller. The object of this Society was to publish a literary and scientific periodical,—the first effort of the kind known in English history. It was called "The Athenian Gazette," and was issued in a single folio, twice a week, at one penny. The first number appeared on Tuesday, March 17th, 1690; thirty numbers, or sixty pages, made what was called a volume, stitched in marble paper: the work was continued to twenty volumes. A collection of the most important questions and answers which had been published in this serial, together with many cases in divinity, history, philosophy, mathematics, &c., which had not been previously published, was afterwards given to the world in four octavo volumes, under the title of "The Athenian Oracle." Although the proprietors of this undertaking appear never to have exceeded the three persons previously named, they reckoned among their contributors many of the first men of the age, such as Dr. Norris, Daniel De

* Moore's "Life of Wesley," vol. i., p. 41.

Foe, Richardson, Nahum Tate, poet laureate, Dean Swift, the Marquis of Halifax, Sir William Temple, Sir Thomas Pope Blount, Sir William Hedges, &c. It was probably in consequence of the intercourse with elevated personages thus opened up to him, that Mr. Wesley was presented, by the Marquis of Normanby, to the small living of South Ormsby, about eight miles from Louth. As there is some difficulty in fixing the dates of the preceding portions of his personal history, it may not be improper to observe that there can be no doubt that Mr. Wesley went to reside at South Ormsby in the year 1690. His predecessor in the living was buried on January 19th of this year, and Mr. Wesley's handwriting is found in the register on the following 26th of August.

Presented to the living of South Ormsby.

At this period, Mr. Wesley's writings had attracted considerable attention. He was the first man in England who wrote in favour of the Revolution of 1688. This work he dedicated to Queen Mary. He also published a poem on the fate of Europe, which so pleased the Duke of Marlborough, that he gave him the chaplaincy of a regiment; and it is said that the Marquis of Normanby recommended him for an Irish bishopric. These fair prospects were never realized. Indeed, his fervent piety and manly spirit were not very likely to make him a favourite with those in power; an instance in proof of which occurred at this period. "My father's first preferment in the Church," says his son John, "was a small parish, (South Ormsby,) obtained for him by the Marquis of Normanby. This nobleman had a house in the parish, where a woman, who lived with him, usually resided; this lady *would* be intimate with my mother, whether *she* would or not. To such an intercourse my father would not submit. Coming in one day, and finding this intrusive visitant

sitting with my mother, he went up to her, took her by the hand, and very fairly handed her out. The nobleman resented the affront so outrageously, as to make it necessary for my father to resign the living." *

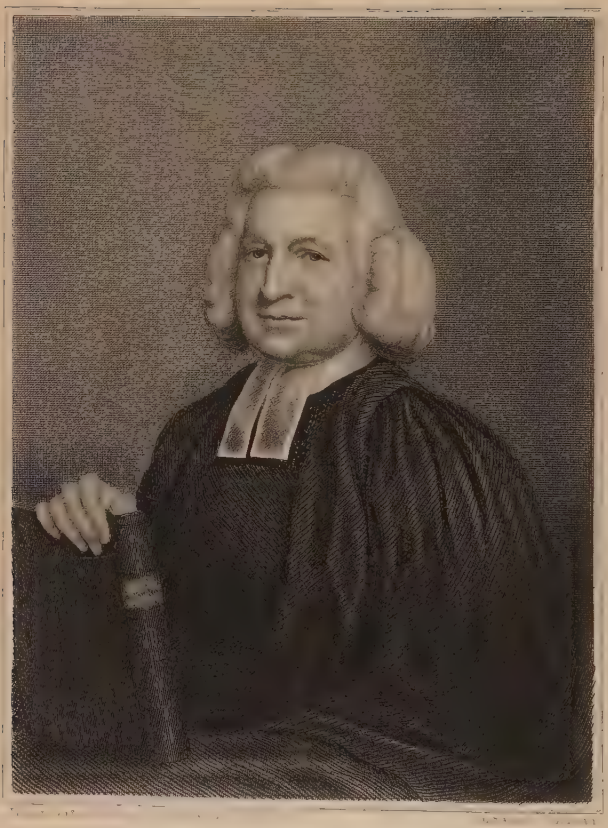
Removes to Epworth.

This treatment, however, did not seriously affect Mr. Wesley's resources; for he was almost immediately afterward presented with the living of Epworth, a parish in Lincolnshire, a rectory in the gift of the crown. The court had not forgotten the prompt and zealous service rendered by his pen, when every element of power was of the utmost importance to the cause of Protestant Christianity, and the success of William and Mary.

Dr. Annesley.

Having seen the Rev. Samuel Wesley established at Epworth, this may be the most convenient place for giving some information respecting Mrs. Wesley and her father. Dr. Samuel Annesley was son of a brother of the first Earl of Anglesea. He was the only child of his parents, and was called Samuel at the earnest request of his grandmother, an eminently religious woman, who died before his birth, and requested that the child, if a boy, might be called Samuel; assigning as the reason of her request, "I can say I have asked him of the Lord." He lost his father when but four years old, but had a pious and judicious mother, who carefully superintended his education. The means at her command were amply sufficient for this purpose, as the family estate was considerable. At fifteen years of age, Samuel Annesley went to Oxford, and in the usual course took his degrees. His piety and diligence were so extraordinary, that his character excited considerable attention in the university. At the age of twenty-four, he was appointed chaplain of the "Globe" man-of-war, which carried the flag of the Earl of Warwick,

* Dr. A. Clarke's "Wesley Family," vol. i., p. 107.



Wesley

then lord high admiral of England. He went to sea with the fleet, and kept a diary of the voyage; but soon quitted the naval service, and at first settled at Cliff, in Kent; where, although he experienced much violent opposition at the outset, his incessant labours were crowned with abundant success. From this place he removed to London, and settled by the unanimous choice of the people in the parish of St. John the Apostle: he was also appointed lecturer of St. Paul's, and in 1658 removed to Cripplegate. He was a man not only of great ability, but of singular uprightness; yet he suffered much for Nonconformity. To have "conformed" was, in his judgment, sinful. He accordingly followed the dictates of his conscience, and was the subject of many remarkable interpositions of Divine Providence. One person died while in the act of signing a warrant for his apprehension. Before his ejection he often preached three times a day; during the troubles, almost every day; afterwards, twice every Lord's-day. His sermons were instructive and affecting, and his manner of delivery peculiarly expressed his heartiness in the truths he set forth.

We learn from Nichols's useful and correct edition of "The Morning Exercises," in six thick volumes, 8vo., that of four of the volumes of sermons under that general title, preached at St. Giles's, Cripplegate, Dr. Annesley was the gifted editor. To each of those volumes he prefixed an able preface and an introductory sermon. To the other two volumes also he was a contributor. For that entitled, "The Morning Exercise Methodized," published in 1659 by his friend, the Rev. Thomas Case, A.M., he wrote the twelfth sermon, "On the Covenant of Grace." For the volume "Against Popery," he wrote the eighteenth sermon, "On Indulgences." All these discourses, as well as his other writings,

exhibit him as a profound divine and an exemplary Christian.

During the operation of the Act of Uniformity, and the Five Mile Act, Dr. Annesley was the general counsellor of the persecuted Puritans. In some measure the care of all the Churches rested on him. When any place wanted a minister, he used his endeavours to procure a suitable supply; when any minister was oppressed by poverty, he exerted himself to relieve the wants of the needy. "O, how many places," says Dr. Daniel Williams, "had sat in darkness, how many ministers had been starved, if Dr. Annesley had died thirty years since!" He lived to exercise his ministry fifty-five years, and then died triumphantly happy in God. A little before his departure, his desire of death appeared strong, and his soul was filled with a foretaste of glory. He often said, "Come, my dearest Jesus! the nearer the more precious, the more welcome." He died saying, "I shall be satisfied with Thy likeness, satisfied, satisfied. O, my dearest Jesus, I come!" Thus departed this excellent man, December 31st, 1696.

Mrs. Susanna Wesley.

Mrs. Susanna Wesley, the wife of the Rev. Samuel Wesley, and the mother of John and Charles Wesley, was the youngest daughter of Dr. Annesley. She was born on the 20th of January, 1669 or 1670. She possessed a fine natural understanding, which was improved to a high state of culture by a most careful and excellent literary and religious education. It is a striking proof of the liberality and catholic temper of the father, and of the mental vigour, energy, and independence of the daughter, that while under the parental roof, before she was thirteen years of age, she had examined, without restraint, the whole controversy between the Established Church and the Dissenters, and from this examination decided to renounce her religious

fellowship with the latter, and to adopt the creed and forms of the Church of England. About the year 1689, when nineteen or twenty years of age, this young lady became the wife of the Rev. Samuel Wesley.

In this relation, and in all its various duties, she displayed a sound judgment and great acquirements. The wife of a poor clergyman, the mother of nineteen children, ten of whom were reared, she was placed in circumstances sufficiently trying to call forth all the resources of the greatest and most cultivated Christian mind. And it is not saying too much that Mrs. Wesley's resources never failed her. She conducted her household affairs with judgment, diligence, and economy. Her children found in her a devoted, talented, and systematic teacher. When rising into life, and indeed through life, her sons as well as daughters had in their mother an able and affectionate counsellor and friend. Many of the productions of her pen on theological subjects display great knowledge, grasp of mind, and sound judgment. Her exposition of the Apostles' Creed, for instance, prepared for the instruction of her daughter Susan, who had been separated from them in consequence of the fire in the parsonage-house, evinces an originality and power, as well as fulness and propriety, which would be creditable to any divine. Whatever the Wesleys became, it is an undoubted fact that they were the sons of a very extraordinary woman, and owed much to the example and instruction of their mother.

In returning to the Wesley family at Epworth, it should be remembered that Samuel, the eldest son, was born whilst Mr. Wesley was a curate in London; five other children, all daughters, of whom three died, were born at South Ormsby; and afterwards thirteen more were born at Epworth. Of the whole, three boys, Samuel, John, and

Charles, and seven girls, Emilia, Susanna, Mary, Mehetabel, Anne, Martha, and Keziah, reached maturity, and were all married, except the last. It is not necessary to detail the various circumstances which have been preserved relating to the history of this family; general information respecting the ancestors and family of John and Charles Wesley being all that this chapter is intended to communicate.

Mr. Samuel Wesley as a pastor.

What has been already said is sufficient to show that Mr. Wesley entered upon the office of the ministry with a full appreciation of its solemn and highly important character. His conduct during the period of more than forty years that he held the living of Epworth, proves that he retained a just sense of his responsibility, and evinced an untiring zeal. Dr. Whitehead says, "As a pastor, he was indefatigable in the duties of his office; a constant preacher, feeding the flock with the pure doctrines of the Gospel, according to his ability; diligent in visiting the sick, and administering such advice as their situations required; and attentive to the conduct of all who were under his care, so that every one in his parish became an object of his concern. No strangers could settle within its limits but he presently knew it, and made himself acquainted with them. We have a proof of this from a letter he wrote to the Bishop of Lincoln, after being absent from home a very short time: 'After my return to Epworth,' says he, 'and looking a little among my people, I found there were two strangers come hither, both of whom I have discovered to be Papists, though they come to church; and I have hopes of making one or both of them good members of the Church of England.'"*

Yet, while awarding this pious and excellent minister the fullest credit for unwearied assiduity and zeal among

* "Life of the Rev. John Wesley," by Dr. Whitehead, vol. i., p. 21.

the members of his flock, his course of action can scarcely be contemplated by a pious and liberal mind at the present time without serious regret, if not with condemnation. He was what is generally called a "rigid Tory" in politics, and a "High Churchman" in religious principle. He regarded Charles I. not only as an injured sovereign, but as truly and properly *a martyr*. And what is more extraordinary, with the piety and persecutions of his father and grandfather in his memory, and the condition and tendencies of the court open to his inspection, "he was very much attached to the interests of James." This comes to us through the unquestionable authority of his son John; nor did anything break off this attachment, but the immediate prospect of royal tyranny falling upon his own order; and even this did not rouse him to resistance. "When," he says, "I heard him (King James II.) say to the master and fellows of Magdalen College, lifting up his lean arm, 'If you refuse to obey me, you shall feel the weight of a king's right hand,' I saw he was a tyrant; and though I was not inclined to take an active part against him, I was resolved from that time to give him no kind of support."* It is true, that when James insisted on the publication of his famous Declaration in the churches, this young minister, with undaunted heroism, dared the peril with which disobedience was threatened, refused compliance, and preached boldly against the dangerous tendency of the proceeding. We are not informed, however, whether it was the progress of Popery, or the liberty of conscience granted to the Puritans, which more strongly called forth the sturdy resistance of Mr. Wesley. At any rate, several years afterwards, when performing the duties of a country parson, he felt so strongly opposed to Presbyterian influence in the senate, as

His High Church and State principles.

* Dr. A. Clarke's "Wesley Family," vol. i., p. 242.

to take a course which exposed him to much annoyance and suffering.

Injudicious conduct.

Dr. Adam Clarke thus records and comments on this course of proceeding. "In May, 1705, there was a contested election for the county of Lincoln; Sir John Thorold, and a person called 'the Champion' Dymoke, the late members, were opposed by Colonel Whichcott and Mr. Alb. Bertie. Mr. Wesley, supposing there was a design to raise up Presbyterianism over the Church, and that Whichcott and Bertie were favourable to it, (in consequence of which the Dissenters were all in their interest,) espoused the other party; which happening to be unpopular and unsuccessful, he was exposed to great insult and danger, not only by the mobs, but by some leading men of the successful faction. There is before me a long account of these shameful transactions, in two letters written to Archbishop Sharp, from which I shall extract only a few particulars.

"'I went to Lincoln on Tuesday night, May 29th, and the election began on Wednesday, 30th. A great part of the night our Isle people drumming, shouting, and firing off pistols and guns under the window where my wife lay, who had been brought to bed not three weeks.....A clergyman met me in the castle yard, and told me to withdraw; for the Isle-men intended me mischief. When they knew I was got home, they sent the drum and mob, with guns, &c."

On this case Dr. Clarke observes, "As I totally disapprove a minister of the Gospel entering into party politics, and especially into electioneering affairs, I cannot but blame Mr. Wesley for the part he took in these transactions; for, even according to his own showing, he acted imprudently, and laid himself open to those who waited for his halting, and who seemed to think they did God service by doing him a mischief, because they knew him to be a High

Churchman, and consequently an enemy to their religious system. He was in their power, being under pecuniary obligations to some principal men among them; and was often led to understand, by no obscure intimations, that he must either immediately discharge those obligations, which he required time to enable him to do, or expect to be shortly lodged in Lincoln Castle: these were not vain threats."* About a fortnight after these events, Mr. Wesley was arrested for a debt rather under thirty pounds, at the suit of one of Mr. Whichcott's relations and zealous supporters, and lay in prison for about three months, until the contributions of his friends furnished him with the means of discharging it.

Severely punished and cruelly persecuted.

Yet, whatever errors in judgment Mr. Wesley might have committed, however indiscreetly he might have acted in these political matters, it is certain that he was treated by his opponents with heartless and inveterate malevolence. His cattle were stabbed in the field, his house-dog maimed, his children threatened to be driven from their home into the highways to beg their bread, and he was vindictively shut up in a gaol: more than once his house was violently attempted; and as his poverty was universally known, robbery could scarcely have been the object, but probably a still fouler purpose. Besides all this, once his house was partially burnt, and on another occasion entirely destroyed by fire. Whether these calamities were occasioned by accident or incendiarism will never be known in this world; but the latter is by no means improbable.

His immense literary labours.

Notwithstanding all these crushing inflictions, Samuel Wesley held on his way, leaving the care of his household, and the education of the younger children, to his excellent wife. He not only discharged his clerical duties with

* "Wesley Family," vol. i., p. 212.

diligence and fidelity, but, unchecked by poverty or persecution, persevered in a course of literary labour of vast magnitude. Besides a great number of smaller, but respectable, poems, he dedicated his "Life of Christ" in verse to Queen Mary; the "History of the Old and New Testaments" to Queen Anne; and his grand and elaborate Latin dissertations on the Book of Job to Queen Caroline. Few authors have lived and laboured so as to produce three works of sufficient importance to present to three successive queens of Great Britain.

Yet these and several other minor productions did not exhaust the energies of this indefatigable man. He had planned and made preparations for a new edition of the Hebrew Scriptures, on a method very similar to that which has been carried into effect in our own time by Mr. Bagster; and, to qualify himself for this task, had plunged into the depths of oriental philology and literature.

These numerous and gigantic efforts, however, did not prevent him giving constant attention to the passing events of his own time, and exerting himself in support of those principles and parties which he believed to be right, and promotive of the well-being of the Church and the nation. When the principles of High Churchmen were assailed in the person of Dr. Sacheverel, and that distinguished clergyman was impeached by the House of Commons, the able and eloquent defence read by him before the House of Peers, one totally different in style and manner from that of his own sermons, was written by the rector of Epworth. When Queen Anne was evidently drawing near the close of her life, great apprehension was felt lest the influence of the crown might be employed to place her brother, the Chevalier St. George, on the throne as her successor, in opposition to the "Act of

Settlement." The Archbishop of York took an opportunity of asking the queen plainly in private, whether she had any design of resigning the crown to the Chevalier. She satisfied the scruples of all by a distinct answer in the negative. But that question was put to the queen at the suggestion of Samuel Wesley.

Missionary plans.

He suggested another great undertaking, which may be considered still more remarkable than any of his previous projects. It was a broad and comprehensive scheme for the complete evangelization of the East; and embraced, in its contemplated range, the conversion to the faith of Christ of all Jews, Mahometans, Gentoos, and Heathens, who might be reached by the evangelical agency of the Church of England, in the vast regions which lie between St. Helena and Abyssinia, the East Indies and China. It also made provision for the religious instruction of the few professing Christians, Protestant as well as Roman Catholic, who were British settlers in our various factories; and for the introduction into a purer faith of all who belonged to the Nestorian, Arian, and Greek Churches, scattered abroad throughout those populous countries, and whose corrupt Creeds and general ignorance of the Holy Scriptures rendered them little superior in faith or practice to their Pagan neighbours. Such was the magnificent plan devised by this earnest and judicious divine. Not only did he lay its details in writing before the Archbishop of York, but, in the spirit of an apostle, he nobly offered to devote his life to carry it out, provided his countrymen would furnish him with means, and support his family. That written project is still in existence, having attached to it the signature of the Archbishop of York: but the glorious enterprise was never commenced. Yet it was such a plan as the English Church and government might have easily put in

execution. Well therefore might Dr. Clarke ask, Why was it not attempted? The answer is obvious: It was because Samuel Wesley lived far in advance of the age which could sympathize with his missionary spirit, or respond to its lofty aspirations.

Strange noises in the parsonage-house at Epworth.

Every biographer of this family has mentioned the strange noises heard in the parsonage-house at Epworth, during the latter part of the year 1715. At first the servant heard dismal groans in the dining-room, as of a dying person; after this, knockings were heard in one place, and then in several parts of the house at the same time; footsteps were distinctly heard, as of a person walking about; rattling sounds, as if bottles were being broken to pieces, became frequent; doors were pushed open, and violently shut; a knocking about the beds at night was almost continual; and what is most remarkable, these unnatural and unaccountable noises continued for months, and one member of the family was annoyed in a similar way thirty-four years afterwards, although then residing in London.

Dr. Priestley's account of them.

The celebrated Dr. Priestley by some means obtained possession of an account of these strange noises, and published it. Of course, a materialist like the doctor could not possibly admit the agency of either angel or spirit; so he resolves it into a trick of the servants, although the servants were frequently with the family when the greatest of these noises were made, and the worst annoyance felt.

Dr. Southey's reply to Priestley.

Dr. Southey speaks on the subject with much more reason and judgment, and supplies a sufficient answer to the scepticism of Priestley. He observes, "An author who in this age relates such a story, and treats it as not incredible and absurd, must expect to be ridiculed; but the testimony upon which it rests is far too strong to be set aside because of the strangeness of the relation. The

letters which passed at the time between Samuel Wesley and the family at Epworth, the journal which Mr. Wesley kept of these remarkable transactions, and the evidence concerning them which John afterward collected, fell into the hands of Dr. Priestley, and were published by him as being, 'perhaps, the best authenticated and best told story of the kind that is anywhere extant.'* He observes, in favour of the story, 'that all the parties seem to be sufficiently void of fear, and also free from credulity, except the general belief that such things were supernatural.' But he argues that, where no good end was to be answered, we may safely conclude, that no miracle was wrought; and he supposes, as the most probable solution, that it was a trick of the servants, assisted by some of the neighbours, for the sake of amusing themselves and puzzling the family. In reply to this, it may safely be asserted, that many of the circumstances cannot be explained by any such supposition, nor by any legerdemain, nor by ventriloquism, nor by any secret of acoustics. The former argument would be valid, if the term 'miracle' were applicable to the case; but by 'miracle' Dr. Priestley evidently intends a manifestation of divine power; and in the present instance no such manifestation is supposed, any more than in the appearance of a departed spirit. Such things may be preternatural, and yet not miraculous: they may not be in the ordinary course of nature, and yet imply no alteration of its laws. And in regard to the good end which they may be supposed to answer, it would be end sufficient, if sometimes one of those unhappy persons who, looking through the dim glass of infidelity, see nothing beyond this life and

* "Original Letters by the Rev. John Wesley and his Friends, illustrative of his early History, with other curious Papers, &c. By Joseph Priestley, LL.D., F.R.S., &c."

the narrow sphere of mortal existence, should, from the well-established truth of one such story, (trifling and objectless as it might otherwise appear,) be led to a conclusion that there are more things in heaven and earth than are dreamt of in their philosophy." *

Dr. Southey is entitled to all honour for daring the ridicule which usually attaches to those who refuse to set down all such accounts as "incredible and absurd." His learning and character enabled him to do this with very little personal risk; but that *little* many others would not, under the circumstances, have incurred. The word of divine revelation cannot be believed, in its plain and obvious sense, nor can we admit the truth of evidence which in respect of every other matter would be regarded as irresistible, if we refuse to allow that, in numerous cases in ancient and modern times, visible and palpable phenomena have been manifested, which can only be accounted for by admitting supernatural agency. And whatever such writers as Dr. Priestley may say, as to the absence of an object in such extraordinary manifestations, it is clearly the grand end of divine revelation, and the first object of God's providential government, to impress the mind of man with the great fact of the certain existence of a spiritual and unseen world; and to this fact such cases as that before us, when authenticated by unquestionable evidence, bear ample testimony.

It has been said, that Samuel and Susanna Wesley brought ten of their children to maturity. Of the daughters it will be sufficient to state, that they were generally very superior women. Some of them had rich poetic genius, and fine taste for composition.

Samuel, the eldest son, was early instructed by his

* Dr. Southey's "Life of Wesley," Third Edition, vol. i., p. 25.

mother in the elements of useful learning, and especially in the great truths of the Christian faith. He was educated at Westminster school; and to that seat of learning maternal solicitude followed him. Letters from his mother are still extant, in which she most strongly urges on him the avoidance of all vice, especially that of neglecting the holy Sabbath; and entreats him to read, study, and use devotion. At Westminster he was elected to Christ Church, Oxford, where, as at Westminster, he acquired the character of an excellent classic scholar. "He was the personal friend of Bishop Atterbury, a prelate of great abilities, of elegant scholarship, and one of the finest writers of the age. The bishop was withal restless, aspiring, and disaffected to the House of Brunswick, one of whose princes had been recently placed on the British throne. A Bill of Pains and Penalties was brought into Parliament, charging Atterbury with attempts to subvert the reigning dynasty, and to restore to the Stuart family the crown of Great Britain. He solemnly avowed his innocence, and defended himself with extraordinary ability and spirit before the House of Lords. The Bill, however, passed, and Atterbury was sent into banishment. Samuel Wesley's love to his friend suffered no abatement in consequence of this act of the legislature. He was, therefore, naturally suspected of entertaining the bishop's political views; especially as he freely lampooned Sir Robert Walpole, the Whig minister of the day, in several poetic satires. Yet no proof exists that he was opposed to the reigning family; and positive testimony is given, by competent witnesses, especially by his brother John, that his loyalty was unshaken." *

Samuel Wesley, Junior.

It was probably on this suspicion that he was, on a paltry plea, refused the second mastership of Westminster school, to which office he had weighty claims. He, in

* Jackson's "Life of Charles Wesley," vol. i., pp. 9, 10.

consequence, about the year 1732, accepted the mastership of the free grammar school at Tiverton, over which establishment he presided until his death. In 1736 he published a quarto volume of poetry, full of spirit and poetical beauties. Among these pieces we have a paraphrase on Isaiah xl. 6–8, occasioned by the death of a young lady, and which is now found in the Wesleyan Hymn Book, beginning,—

"The morning flowers display their sweets," &c.

Mr. Samuel Wesley, as a High Churchman, greatly disapproved of the conduct of his brothers, when they began their itinerant and field preaching; he also objected to the doctrines they preached; and these differences of opinion led to a correspondence which may hereafter be referred to.

The early life of John and Charles Wesley will form the subject of the next chapter.

In closing this sketch of the fathers and family of the Wesleys, the serious attention of the reader is directed to the remarkable qualities which several of them possessed; the peculiar school of chastening and religious discipline to which they had been subjected for generations; and the extent to which their religious principles were tested, and their qualities of mind developed. Let all these points be candidly and religiously considered in connexion with the admitted prevalence of vice and ignorance, time-serving and apostasy, at that day; and then let it be said whether, in case Providence designed to raise up two young men to extend the saving influences of the Gospel throughout these lands, a more obviously suitable parentage and family connexion could have been selected, than that of the Wesleys. It is scarcely possible to find in all history a more remarkable providential arrangement than that which these facts exhibit.

CHAPTER III.

THE EARLY LIFE OF JOHN AND CHARLES WESLEY.

Birth of John Wesley.

JOHN and Charles Wesley were the sons of Samuel Wesley, rector of Epworth, and Susanna, his wife. John was born on the 17th of June, 1703, O. S. Some difference of opinion having been expressed respecting the date of his birth, it may be desirable to insert a copy of a certificate drawn up by his father to satisfy the bishop respecting the age of John prior to his ordination, which puts the time of his birth beyond all question.

"EPWORTH, *August* 23*rd*, 1728.

"JOHN WESLEY, A.M., Fellow of Lincoln College, was twenty-five years old the 17th of June last, having been baptized a few hours after his birth by me,

"SAMUEL WESLEY, *Rector of Epworth.*"

Towards the close of life, Wesley made frequent mention of his birthday, and uniformly represents it as occurring on the 28th of June. One of the earliest of these records begins thus: "*Thursday*, June 28th, 1770. I can hardly believe that I am this day entered into the sixty-eighth year of my age. How marvellous are the ways of God!" This is perfectly in keeping with his father's certificate, both as to the year and the day. In that document he is said two months previously to have *entered on* his twenty-sixth year; and in his "Journal," just quoted, he describes himself as having *completed* his sixty-seventh

year. The eleven intercalary days to be added to June 17th bring us to the 28th, and constitute the difference between the New and the Old Style; an important change, which was duly chronicled in his "Journal." *

His imminent danger from fire.

When John was nearly six years old, the whole family very narrowly escaped destruction by the burning of the parsonage-house at Epworth. This fire was generally supposed to have been occasioned by accident; although it is evident from many observations which fell from the rector himself, that he believed it to have been caused by the deliberate wickedness of some of the parishioners who were opposed to him. John Wesley certainly concurred in this opinion; and it is strongly supported by the fact, that two attempts to set the house on fire had been previously made.

The best account of this calamity which has come down to us, is found in an extract from a letter written by Mrs. Wesley. She says, "On Wednesday night, February the 9th, between the hours of eleven and twelve, our house took fire; by what accident, God only knows. It was discovered by some sparks falling from the roof upon a bed, where one of the children (Hetty) lay, and burning her feet. She immediately ran to our chamber and called us; but I believe no one heard her: for Mr. Wesley was alarmed by a cry of 'Fire!' in the street, upon which he rose, little imagining that his own house was on fire; but, on opening his door, he found it was full of smoke, and that the roof was already burnt through. He immediately came to my room,—as I was very ill, he lay in a separate room from me,—and bid me and my two eldest daughters

* After recording his movements on "*Wednesday*, September 2nd, 1752," the next day he makes this entry: "*Thursday*, 14th. So we must call it now, seeing the New Style now takes place."

rise quickly and shift for our lives, the house being all on fire. Then he ran and burst open the nursery door, and called to the maid to bring out the children. The two little ones lay in the bed with her, the three others in another bed. She snatched up the youngest, and bid the rest follow, which they did, except Jacky. When we got into the hall and saw ourselves surrounded with flames, and that the roof was on the point of falling, we concluded ourselves inevitably lost, as Mr. Wesley in his fright had forgot the keys of the doors above stairs. But he ventured up stairs once more, and recovered them, just before the staircase took fire. When we opened the street door, the strong north-east wind drove the flames in with such violence, that none could stand against them. Mr. Wesley only had such presence of mind as to think of the garden door, out of which he helped some of the children; the rest got out through the windows. I was not in a condition to climb up to the windows, nor could I get to the garden door. I endeavoured three times to force my way to the street door, but was so often beat back by the fury of the flames. In this distress I besought our blessed Saviour to preserve me, if it were His will, from that death; and then waded through the fire, naked as I was, which did me no further harm than a little scorching of my hands and face.

"While Mr. Wesley was carrying the children into the garden, he heard the child in the nursery cry out miserably for help, which extremely affected him; but his affliction was much increased, when he had several times attempted the stairs, then on fire, and found they would not bear his weight. Finding it was impossible to get near him, he gave him up for lost, and, kneeling down, he commended his soul to God, and left him, as he thought, perishing in the flames. But the boy seeing none come to his help,

and being frightened,—the chamber and bed being on fire,—he climbed to the casement, where he was soon perceived by the men in the yard, who immediately got up and pulled him out, just in the article of time that the roof fell in, and beat the chamber to the ground. Thus, by the infinite mercy of Almighty God, our lives were all preserved by little less than a miracle; for there passed but a few minutes between the alarm of fire, and the falling of the house." *

Mr. John Wesley gives an account from his recollection of the event, which varies a little from that of his mother. He says, "I believe it was just at that time" (when they thought they heard him cry) "I waked; for I did not cry as they imagined, unless it was afterwards. I remember all the circumstances as distinctly as though it were yesterday. Seeing the room was light, I called to the maid to take me up; but none answering, I put my head out of the curtains, and saw streaks of fire on the top of the room. I got up and ran to the door, but could get no further, all the floor beyond it being in a blaze. I then climbed upon a chest, which stood near the window: one in the yard saw me, and proposed running to fetch a ladder. Another answered, 'There will not be time; but I have thought of another expedient. Here, I will fix myself against the wall; lift a light man, and set him on my shoulders.' They did so, and he took me out of the window. Just then the roof fell; but it fell inward, or we had all been crushed at once. When they brought me into the house where my father was, he cried out, 'Come, neighbours, let us kneel down! let us give thanks unto God! He has given me all my eight children: let the house go, I am rich enough!'" †

The account furnished by the Rector himself, in a letter

* Dr. Whitehead's "Life of Wesley," vol. i., p. 377. † *Ibid.*, p. 379.

to his friend, the Duke of Buckingham, supplies much additional information respecting this calamity, and casts considerable light on the character of the Wesley family.

"Righteous is the Lord, and just in all His judgments! I am grieved that I must write what will, I doubt, afflict your Grace, concerning your still unfortunate servant. I think I am enough recollected to give a tolerable account of it.

"On Wednesday last, at half an hour after eleven at night, in a quarter of an hour's time, or less, my house at Epworth was burned down to the ground: I hope by accident; but God knows all. We had been brewing, but done all; every spark of fire quenched before five o'clock that evening, at least six hours before the house was on fire. Perhaps the chimney above might take fire, (though it had been swept not long since,) and break through into the thatch. Yet it is strange I should neither see nor smell anything of it, having been in my study in that part of the house till above half an hour after ten. Then I locked the doors of that part of the house, where my wheat and other corn lay, which was threshed, and went to bed.

"The servants had not been in bed a quarter of an hour, when the fire began. My wife being near her time, and very weak, I lay in the next chamber. A little after eleven I heard 'Fire' cried in the street, next to which I lay. If I had been in our own chamber, as usual, we had all been lost. I threw myself out of bed, got on my waistcoat and night-gown, and looked out of the window; saw the reflection of the flame, but knew not where it was; ran to my wife's chamber with one stocking on, and my breeches in my hand; would have broken open the door, which was bolted within, but could not. My two eldest children were

with her. They rose, and ran towards the staircase, to raise the rest of the house. There I saw it was my own house, all in a light blaze, and nothing but a door between the flame and the staircase.

"I ran back to my wife, who by this time had got out of bed naked, and opened the door. I bade her fly for her life. We had a little silver, and some gold; about £20. She would have stayed for it, but I pushed her out; got her and my two eldest children down stairs, (where two of the servants were now got,) and asked for the keys. They knew nothing of them. I ran up stairs, and found them; came down, and opened the street door. The thatch was fallen off, all on fire. The north-east wind drove all the sheets of flame in my face, as if reverberated in a lamp. I got twice on the steps, and was drove down again. I ran to the garden door, and opened it. The fire was there more moderate. I bade them all follow, but found only two with me, and the maid with another* in her arms that cannot go; but all naked. I ran with them to my house of office in the garden, out of the reach of the flames; put the least in the other's lap, and, not finding my wife follow me, ran back into the house to seek her, but could not find her. The servants and two of the children were got out at the window. In the kitchen I found my eldest daughter naked, and asked her for her mother. She could not tell where she was. I took her up, and carried her to the rest in the garden; came in the second time, and ran up stairs, the flame breaking through the wall at the staircase; thought all my children were safe, and hoped my wife was some way got out. I then remembered my books, and felt in my pocket for the key of the chamber which led to my study. I could not find the key, though I searched a

* "This must have been Charles."

second time. Had I opened that door, I must have perished.

"I ran down, and went to my children in the garden, to help them over the wall. When I was without, I heard one of my poor lambs left still above-stairs, about six years old, cry out dismally, 'Help me!' I ran in again to go up stairs; but the staircase was now all a-fire. I tried to force up through it the second time, holding my breeches over my head; but the stream of fire beat me down. I thought I had done my duty; went out of the house to that part of my family I had saved, in the garden, with the killing cry of my child still in my ears. I made them all kneel down; and we prayed God to receive his soul.

"I tried to break the pales down, and get my children over into the street, but could not; then went under the flame, and got them over the wall. Now I put on my breeches, and leaped after them. One of my maid-servants, that had brought out the least child, got out much at the same time. She was saluted with an hearty curse by one of the neighbours, and told that we had fired the house ourselves, the second time, on purpose. I ran about, inquiring for my wife and other children; met the chief man and chief constable of the town, going from my house, not towards it, to help me. I took him by the hand, and said, 'God's will be done!' His answer was, 'Will you never have done your tricks? You fired your house once before. Did you not get money enough by it then, that you have done it again?' This was cold comfort. I said, 'God forgive you! I find you are chief Maw still.' But I had a little better soon after, hearing that my wife was saved; and then I fell on mother earth, and blessed God.

"I went to her. She was alive, and could just speak. She thought I had perished, and so did all the rest, not having seen me, nor any share of eight children, for a quarter of an hour; and by this time all the chambers, and every thing, was consumed to ashes; for the fire was stronger than a furnace, the violent wind beating it down on the house. She told me afterwards how she escaped. When I went first to open the back-door, she endeavoured to force through the fire at the fore-door, but was struck back twice to the ground. She thought to have died there, but prayed to Christ to help her. She found new strength, got up alone, and waded through two or three yards of flame, the fire on the ground being up to her knees. She had nothing on but her shoes and a wrapping-gown, and one coat on her arm. This she wrapped about her breast, and got safe through, into the yard; but no soul yet to help her. She never looked up or spake till I came; only, when they brought her last child to her, bade them lay it on the bed. This was the lad whom I heard cry in the house; but God saved him by almost a miracle. He only was forgot by the servants in the hurry. He ran to the window towards the yard, stood upon a chair, and cried for help. There were now a few people gathered; one of whom, who loves me, helped up another to the window. The child, seeing a man coming into the window, was frighted, and ran away, to get to his mother's chamber. He could not open the door, so ran back again. The man was fallen down from the window, and all the bed and hangings in the room where he was were blazing. They helped up the man the second time, and poor Jacky leaped into his arms, and was saved. I could not believe it till I had kissed him two or three times. My wife then said unto me, 'Are your books safe?' I told her, it was not

much, now she and all the rest were preserved; for we lost not one soul, though I escaped with the skin of my teeth. A little lumber was saved below-stairs, but not one rag or leaf above. We found some of the silver in a lump, which I shall send up to Mr. Hoare to sell for me.

"Mr. Smith, of Gainsborough, and others, have sent for some of my children. I have left my wife at Epworth, trembling; but hope God will preserve her, and fear not but He will provide for us. I want nothing, having above half my barley saved in my barns, unthreshed. I had finished my alterations in the 'Life of Christ' a little while since, and transcribed three copies of it. But all is lost. God be praised!

"I know not how to write to my poor boy * about it; but I must, or else he will think we are all lost. Can your Grace forgive this, and all the rest?

"I hope my wife will recover, and not miscarry; but God will give me my nineteenth child. She has burnt her legs; but they mend. When I came to her, her lips were black. I did not know her. Some of the children are a little burnt, but not hurt or disfigured. I only got a small blister on my hand. The neighbours send us clothes, for it is cold without them."†

John and Charles instructed by their mother.

John, in common with the other children, received the rudiments of learning from his mother. Nothing is found in the written memorials of the Wesleys, which indicates that the boys were ever put to any school in the country. It is more than probable that they were not; for it is well known that Mrs. Wesley had formed a very low estimate of the common methods of instructing and governing

* "His eldest son Samuel, who was then at Westminster School, and about seventeen years of age."

† JACKSON'S "Life of Charles Wesley," vol. ii., pp. 494–7.

children. She, indeed, was not only attentive to their intellectual culture, but, in addition, earnestly endeavoured to give them, as early as possible, just and useful notions of religion. And her mind appears to have been drawn out with unusual earnestness in concern for John. Dr. Whitehead has preserved one of her written meditations, when this child was eight years old, which shows how much her heart was engaged in forming his mind for religion. This is the meditation:—

"Evening, May 17th, 1711. Son *John*.—What shall I render unto the Lord for all His mercies? The little unworthy praise that I can offer is so mean and contemptible an offering, that I am even ashamed to tender it. But, Lord, accept it for the sake of Christ, and pardon the deficiency of the sacrifice.

"I would offer Thee myself, and all that Thou hast given me; and I would resolve,—O give me grace to do it!—that the residue of my life shall be all devoted to Thy service. And I do intend to be more particularly careful of the soul of this child, that Thou hast so mercifully provided for, than ever I have been; that I may do my endeavour to instil into his mind the principles of Thy true religion, and virtue. Lord, give me grace to do it sincerely and prudently, and bless my attempts with good success!" *

It was under such maternal piety and solicitude that John and Charles Wesley passed through the period of childhood. When about nine years old, John had the small-pox; but his mother said, "he bore the disease like a man, and, indeed, like a Christian, without any complaint." In 1714 he was placed at the Charterhouse School, where he became distinguished for diligence and progress in learning.

John at the Charterhouse.

* Dr. Whitehead's "Life," vol. i., p. 380.

He had, indeed, as was universal in public schools at the time, to suffer much from the tyranny of the elder boys,—a usage which, to the great disgrace of the present day, although diminished, is not abolished. When Wesley was at the Charterhouse, not only was this tyranny allowed to be manifested in other acts of cruelty, but the elder boys were accustomed, in addition to their own share, to take the portions of animal food provided for the younger scholars. In consequence of this he was limited, for a considerable part of the time, to a small daily portion of bread as his only solid food. There was one thing, however, which contributed among others to his general flow of health, and to the establishment of his constitution; and that was, his invariable attention to a strict command of his father, that he should run round the Charterhouse garden, which was of considerable extent, three times every morning. His progress in learning at the Charterhouse was highly satisfactory. Just before he left that school, his father had doubts as to the profession to which he should bring up his youngest son Charles, when Samuel wrote him from Westminster to this effect: "My brother Jack, I can faithfully assure you, gives you no manner of discouragement from breeding your third son a scholar." At the age of sixteen, John was elected to Christ Church, Oxford, and at college he displayed the same diligence as at school.

Charles at Westminster School.

Two years after John had left his father's house, Charles was placed at Westminster, under the care of his brother Samuel, who was then one of the ushers of that establishment, and who, for a while, bore the expense of his brother's maintenance and education. Charles was exceedingly sprightly and active, and remarkable for courage and skill in juvenile encounters with his schoolfellows. He

was, however, as generous as he was brave; and finding a Scottish youth who, in consequence of his ancestors having taken an active part with the Pretender, was greatly persecuted by the other boys, Charles Wesley protected the lad, fought his battles, and aided him on every necessary occasion. This boy was James Murray, afterwards the great Lord Mansfield, who, in the decline of life, renewed his intimacy with Charles Wesley, which was thus begun in their boyhood.

An incident occurred during the residence of Charles Wesley at Westminster, which deserves serious attention, as one link in the chain of providences by which the Wesleys were guided to their great work of religious reformation. Garret Wesley, Esq., a gentleman of large property in Ireland, wrote to the rector of Epworth, asking whether he had a son named Charles, and stating that it was his wish to adopt a youth of that name as his heir. The answer to this inquiry appears to have accorded with the gentleman's views; for a person in London defrayed the expenses of Charles's education for several years. At length another gentleman called upon him, who is supposed to have been Mr. Garret Wesley himself. "He talked largely with Charles, and asked if he was willing to accompany him to Ireland. Charles wrote to his father for advice; and the father, who answered immediately, referred the matter to the son's own choice. Thus left to decide for himself, he resolved to remain in England and to decline the flattering offer."* That which gives importance to this circumstance is the fact, that Mr. Garret Wesley, being thus disappointed in getting a person of his own name to accept his offer, tendered it to a relation, on condition that he should take the name of Wesley in

Garret Wesley offers to adopt Charles.

* JACKSON'S "Life of Charles Wesley," vol. i., p. 11.

addition to his own. The person who was thus applied to, and who accepted the overture, was Richard Colley, afterward known as Richard Colley Wesley. He was auditor and registrar of the royal hospital of Kilmainham, and second chamberlain of the Irish Court of Exchequer. In the year 1734, he was sheriff of Meath, and he sat in Parliament many years as member for Carysfort. He was raised to the peerage by the title of Baron Mornington, by George II., in 1747, and was grandfather of the Duke of Wellington, and the Marquis of Wellesley. The statement that Garret Wesley offered to adopt Charles has been questioned by a recent biographer of the great duke, but most unreasonably. The Rev. John Wesley wrote an account of it a short time before his death, and calls his brother's decision "a fair escape." On a matter of this kind it is impossible to deny that Wesley was a competent witness, and his veracity is unquestionable.

No Wesleyan—indeed, no Englishman—can contemplate the contingency which this narrative places before us, without interest. Charles Wesley refused the offer of Garret Wesley; but had he accepted it, and been removed to Ireland, in his then immature state of religious instruction and experience, and placed, far away from his religious friends and relatives, under the full influence of the world and of wealth, where would John Wesley have found an equally able and zealous associate in his evangelizing labours? Whence could Methodism have procured such a collection of spiritual poetry as now fills her sanctuaries with songs of salvation? And on the other hand, whence could England have looked for her great hero? It is most improbable that Richard Colley, unaided by the wealth and influence which he derived from Garret Wesley, would ever have obtained a peerage, or that, without the *prestige*

and power thus secured, one of his grandsons would have been governor-general of India, and another have had the command in chief of a British army. Every way, therefore, the decision of Charles Wesley was important to Methodism, to Britain, and to the world. If any difficulty is felt as to the difference between the present family name of the Duke of Wellington, Wellesley, and Wesley, it is at once removed by the fact, that Wellesley is an alteration or corruption of the more ancient name, which has been but recently adopted. The name of the great duke himself stands in the "Army List" of 1800, as "the Hon. Arthur Wesley, lieutenant-colonel of the thirty-third regiment."

John Wesley at Oxford. Advice of his parents as to his future course.

The time now approached when John Wesley would have to decide on his future course of life; and, in considering this question, the first and most natural course was, that he should take orders, and become, like his father, a minister of the Established Church. On giving earnest consideration to this very important subject in all its consequences to himself and others, it is said that it made so deep an impression on his mind, that he became more serious than usual, and applied himself diligently to the study of divinity. But he did not yet clearly see his course of duty. He doubted, and wrote to his father for assistance. The reply is dated, "January 26th, 1725," and says, "As to what you mention of entering into holy orders, it is indeed a great work, and I am pleased to find you think it so. As to the motives you take notice of, my thoughts are,—if it is no harm to desire getting into that office, even as *Eli's* sons, *to eat a piece of bread;* yet certainly a desire and intention to lead a stricter life, and a belief that one should do so, is a better reason. Though this should by all means be begun before, or, ten to one, it

will deceive us afterwards. But if a man be unwilling and undesirous to enter into orders, it is easy to guess, whether he can say, so much as with common honesty, that he trusts he is 'moved to it by the Holy Ghost.' But the principal spring and the motive to which all the former should be only secondary, must certainly be the glory of God, and the service of the Church in the edification of our neighbour. And woe to him who, with any meaner leading view, attempts so sacred a work!" He then mentions the qualifications necessary for holy orders, and hints that in his judgment it was rather too early for his son to take that solemn obligation on him; and in a postscript, alluding to his own failing health, he encourages John to work and write while he had the strength.

John Wesley's mother was as ready, and probably as able, to advise him in respect of this important step as his father. She was not only a woman of extraordinary energy and judgment, but understood Greek and Latin, and was well read in theology. She told him, "I think the sooner you are a deacon the better, because it may be a greater inducement to greater application in the study of practical divinity, which, of all other studies, I humbly conceive to be the best for candidates for orders." She then proceeded to say, that she had noticed lately an alteration of his temper, which she hoped was the result of the Holy Spirit's working on his heart; and went on to urge on him an earnest attention to self-examination, and to the attainment of spiritual religion. "This matter," she observes in conclusion, "deserves great consideration by all, but especially by those designed for the ministry; who ought, above all things, to make their own calling and election sure, lest, after having preached to others, they themselves should be cast away."

These sensible and pious exhortations were not lost on the mind of John Wesley. The young scholar threw his whole strength into his work. He devoted himself with diligence to the study of divinity, and gave special attention to those books which were likely to guide him to a sound judgment in spiritual matters, and to lead his affections toward God. With this view he carefully studied Thomas à Kempis on "The Imitation of Christ," and Bishop Taylor's "Rules of Holy Living and Dying." The views presented in the former work appeared too strict for the young student; but he, unlike most young men of his age, was diffident of his own judgment, and applied to his parents for advice. This inquiry elicited from his mother the following sensible remarks: "I take Kempis to have been an honest, weak man, that had more zeal than knowledge, by his condemning all mirth or pleasure as sinful or useless, in opposition to so many direct and plain texts of Scripture. Would you judge of the lawfulness or unlawfulness of pleasure, of the innocence or malignity of actions, take this rule: whatever weakens your reason, impairs the tenderness of your conscience, obscures your sense of God, or takes off the relish of spiritual things; in short, whatever increases the strength and authority of your body over your mind, that thing is sin to you, however innocent it may be in itself." Wesley was ordained deacon in September, 1725.

John Fellow of Lincoln.

John Wesley was elected Fellow of Lincoln College, March 17th, 1726, and consequently left Christ Church for his new residence. His family were greatly delighted at this success; and his father wrote him a congratulatory letter on the occasion. John spent the whole of the summer following his election in the country with his parents. But this was not a season of idleness, or of religious inac-

tivity. He usually read prayers and preached twice for his father on the Lord's day, and in other ways rendered him important help. He diligently pursued his studies, and availed himself of the piety and experience of his parents to increase his knowledge of divine things. He often noted down the subjects discussed in these conversations, mentioning the practical observations, and sometimes adding remarks of his own. Among other subjects thus mooted, the following hold a conspicuous place:—how to increase our faith, our hope, our love of God; prudence, simplicity, sincerity, pride, vanity, &c.

Wesley returned to Oxford in the following September, and resumed his usual studies. His literary character was now established in the university; he was acknowledged by all parties to be a man of talents, and an excellent critic in the learned languages. His compositions were distinguished by an elegant simplicity of style and justness of thought, that strongly marked the refinement of his classical taste. His skill in logic was universally known and admired. The high opinion entertained of him in these respects was soon publicly expressed, by choosing him Greek lecturer and moderator of the classics on the 7th of November, though he had only been elected Fellow of the college in March, was little more than twenty-three years of age, and had not yet proceeded Master of Arts.* He took this degree in February, 1727, and rejoiced that the step would enable him to exercise more freedom in his studies, so that deficiencies might be supplied: but he especially desired to attain a more practical knowledge of God, and entire conformity to His will, in the temper of his mind, and in all his actions; and this he found to be a more difficult task.

* Dr. Whitehead's "Life of John Wesley," vol. i., p. 404.

John Wesley curate at Epworth.

About this time the rector of Epworth became less able to attend to the duties of his two livings, and earnestly desired John to return home and assist him as his curate. He complied with his father's wishes, and left Oxford in August, 1827. But he visited that university in the following year, and was ordained priest by Dr. Potter, Bishop of Oxford, and immediately afterwards returned to the duties of his curacy at Wroote and Epworth.

Charles Wesley was elected to Christ Church when about eighteen, and consequently removed from Westminster to Oxford. At this time, he was neither serious in his spirit, nor diligent in his endeavours to increase in knowledge. During the whole of his stay at Westminster, he had been under the direction of his eldest brother Samuel; but, on reaching Oxford, he felt as if at his own disposal, and was far from being an earnest student. After a while, however, he chose that course which had previously been urged on him, and became assiduous in his efforts to acquire learning; but his spirit was undevout. "He pursued his studies diligently," says John, "and led a regular, harmless life; but if I spoke to him about religion, he would warmly answer, 'What! would you have me to be a saint all at once?' and would hear no more." * Such was the state of the two brothers when John left Oxford to become his father's curate. But soon after that event, and apparently without the intervention of any particular means, Charles Wesley also became deeply serious, and earnestly desired to be a spiritual worshipper of God. Knowing that his brother John kept a diary, in which he noted down those things which religiously affected him, he wrote for advice respecting such a course, as he believed it would be useful to himself. In this letter he says,

* Jackson's "Life of Charles Wesley," vol. i., p. 14.

"God has thought fit (it may be to increase my wariness) to deny me at present your company and assistance. It is through Him strengthening me I trust to maintain my ground till we meet. And I hope that neither before nor after that time I shall relapse into my former state of insensibility. It is through your means, I firmly believe, that God will establish what He hath begun in me; and there is no one person I would so willingly have to be the instrument of good to me as you. It is owing, in great measure, to somebody's prayers, (my mother's, most likely,) that I am come to think as I do; for I cannot tell myself how or when I awoke out of my lethargy: only that it was not long after you went away." * This letter was written in the beginning of 1729.

Charles Wesley and his devout associates called "Methodists."

No sooner had Charles Wesley become devout, than he longed to be useful to those about him; and it was the operation of this feeling, probably, placing him in friendly intercourse with other serious young men, which first exposed him and his godly companions to the derisive epithet of "Methodists." †

Although this name was given to these serious young men, it does not appear that they had formed any plan of action, or that they met together at any fixed or stated times. Mr. Charles Wesley's own account of it is, that he lost his first year at college in diversions; that the next he set himself to study; that diligence led him into serious thinking; that he went to the weekly sacrament, persuading two or three students to accompany him; and that he observed the method of study prescribed by the statutes of the university.‡

* JACKSON'S "Life," vol. i., p. 15.

† For an account of the origin of this word, see Appendix C, at the end of this volume.

‡ WATSON'S "Life of Wesley," p. 11.

John Wesley visited Oxford, June, 1729, and did not return to Epworth until August following. During this sojourn at the university he had frequent intercourse with his brother and his devout associates. Soon after his return to Epworth, he received a letter from Dr. Morley, the rector of his college, stating that it had been found necessary to require all junior fellows who had been chosen moderators, to attend to the duties of their office in person, and urging him to a compliance with this requirement. This he immediately did, and, in November of the same year, became again a resident at Oxford.

John Wesley returns to Oxford.

He was welcomed by his brother and his companions, and chosen to be their chief and adviser. They were at this time but four, who were thus fully united together,—John Wesley, Charles Wesley, Mr. Morgan, and Mr. Kirkman. At first the object of their union was limited to personal improvement and edification. "They agreed to spend three or four evenings in the week together, in reading the Greek Testament, with the Greek and Latin classics. On Sunday evenings they read divinity." Mr. Morgan was the first to extend their object to a religious concern for others. Having, in the summer of 1730, called at the gaol to see a man who was condemned for killing his wife, he had a conversation with one of the debtors, which induced him to tell his companions, that he verily believed it would do much good, if any one would be at the pains of now and then speaking with them. This led the little company to determine to visit the prisoners once or twice a week. They had not long continued this practice, before Mr. Morgan, who seems to have led the way in these acts of charity, asked Mr. Wesley to go with him to see a poor woman in the town, who was sick. This induced them to reflect on the good that might be done by spending two or three hours a week in these works of

mercy, especially if the minister of the parish did not object. But this course of action was so novel, and had such an appearance of irregularity, that Mr. Wesley determined to ask his father's advice before he fully committed himself to it. The venerable minister replied, "As to your own designs and employments, what can I say less of them than *Valde probo;*" ("I highly approve;") "and that I have the highest reason to bless God that He has given me two sons together at Oxford, to whom He has given grace and courage to turn the war against the world and the devil, which is the best way to conquer them?" And after sundry other advices, the letter concluded thus: "Your first regular step is to consult with him, if any such there be, who has a jurisdiction over the prisoners; and the next is, to obtain the direction and approbation of the bishop." *

Active exertions of the Oxford Methodists.

Such advice from a man of so much learning, piety, experience, and love of Church order, as the rector of Epworth, greatly encouraged them; and having complied with the counsel which they had received, and experienced no difficulty, they pursued their way with renewed ardour and zeal. Their numbers also slowly increased. In 1730, two or three of Mr. John Wesley's pupils requested permission to meet with them; and afterward one of Charles's pupils. Mr. Benjamin Ingham, of Queen's College, and Mr. T. Broughton, of Exeter, were added to them in 1732. In the spring of the same year, they were joined by Mr. Clayton, of Brazennose, and two or three of his pupils. About the same time, Mr. James Hervey, of Lincoln College, (author of the "Meditations,") and Mr. George Whitefield, of Pembroke, were added to their number.

This course was not pursued year after year without exposing them to severe opposition. They became the butt

* Moore's "Life of Wesley," vol. i., p. 169.

of ridicule and scorn, a bye-word for the thoughtless and the profane. They were, however, enabled to hold on their way. Mr. Morgan, who had always been foremost in works of charity, after a lengthened illness, died in August, 1732; the seductive influence of an eminent person of station and reputed piety took away another; violent persecution damped the ardour of others; but the Wesleys, encouraged by their pious father, persevered.

John Wesley's spiritual state.

Yet it is evident that John Wesley, whilst prosecuting this devoted course of pious and self-denying action, was not living in the experience of the salvation of the Gospel. The following passages from a letter to his mother, written about this time, clearly unfold the state of his mind:—

"You say you have renounced the world. And what have I been doing all this time? What have I done ever since I was born? Why, I have been plunging myself into it more and more. It is enough: 'Awake thou that sleepest.' Is there not one Lord, one Spirit, one hope of our calling? one way of attaining that hope? Then I am to renounce the world as well as you. That is the very thing I want to do,—to draw off my affections from this world, and fix them on a better. But how? What is the surest and shortest way? Is it not to be humble? Surely this is a large step in the way. But the question recurs, How am I to do this? To own the necessity is not to be humble. In many things you have interceded for me, and prevailed. Who knows but in this, too, you may be successful? If you can spare me only that little part of Thursday evening, which you formerly bestowed upon me in another manner, I doubt not but it would be as useful now for correcting my heart, as it was then for forming my judgment.

"When I observe how fast life flies away, and how slow improvement comes, I think one can never be too much afraid of dying before one has learned to live; I mean, even

in the course of nature. For were I sure the 'silver cord' should not be violently 'loosed,' that 'the wheel' should not 'be broken at the cistern,' till it was quite worn away by its own motion; yet what a time would this give me for such a work! a moment to transact the business of eternity! What are forty years in comparison of this? So that, were I sure, what never man yet was sure of, how little would it alter the case! How justly still might I cry out!—

'Downward I hasten to my destined place;
There none obtain Thy aid, none sing Thy praise.
Soon shall I lie in Death's deep ocean drown'd:
Is mercy there? is sweet forgiveness found?
O save me yet, while on the brink I stand!
Rebuke these storms, and set me safe on land!
O make my longings and Thy mercy sure!
Thou art the God of power.'"*

This is certainly the language of a deeply devout mind, conscious of wanting, and longing to obtain, entire conformity to the divine will. Here we see the learned and strong-minded college tutor pausing amid his labours, to unbosom the state of his soul to his godly mother, and imploring her to set apart some portion of her time to seek, by intercessory prayer to God, that he might attain true humility and self-renunciation. This was the spiritual condition of John Wesley while he was regarded as a prodigy of piety at Oxford. January 1st, 1733, he preached at St. Mary's a sermon on the circumcision of the heart, in which he gives just such an exposition of spiritual religion as would be given by a man seeking to be earnestly devoted to God, yet ignorant of the way of salvation by simple faith in Christ.

He was about this time called to pass through very

* Dr. Whitehead's "Life of Wesley," vol. i., p. 443.

severe trials. Short and necessary as were his occasional seasons of absence from Oxford, they told very sadly on the stability of his young associates. The storm of opposition and persecution still raged, and many who had given promise of a better result shrank from continued ridicule and censure; so that the five-and-twenty communicants at St. Mary's were reduced to five. Still John Wesley and his brother stood firm, and devoted themselves to their work with such earnestness, that at length John's health gave way; he expectorated blood, and his friends were for a while much alarmed: but his constitution sustained the shock; and he recovered his usual strength, and renewed his labours under a deeper sense than ever of the brevity of time and the importance of eternity.

He is earnestly urged by his father to reside permanently at Epworth. He refuses.

Another trial soon met him: his father was now evidently declining in health, and anxiously wished to see a suitable provision made for the spiritual wants of a parish in which he had spent so many years of his life. Nothing seemed so likely to meet this case satisfactorily, as for his son John to secure the appointment, as his father's successor. The parishioners were as earnest in this wish as their venerable rector. The measure seemed also specially desirable on account of the family, which would thus be kept together,—at least the widow and the unmarried daughters,—and not be left totally unprovided for on the death of the good old man. He accordingly wrote to John on the subject: but the reply showed that his son believed he could get more good and do more good at Oxford, than as a country rector. The request was urged by his brother Samuel with great energy, and also by other members of the family; but in vain. John was inflexible; he fully believed it to be his religious duty to remain at Oxford: he therefore replied kindly, but firmly, to all the arguments of

his family. The correspondence continued for some time, especially between his brother Samuel and himself, until the whole matter was resolved into one question, namely, whether at his ordination he did, or did not, solemnly engage "to undertake the cure of a parish." He admitted that he was not the proper judge of this engagement: so he immediately referred the question to the bishop for his decision. The answer was, "It doth not seem to me, that at your ordination you engaged yourself to undertake the cure of any parish, provided you can, as a clergyman, better serve God and His Church in your present or some other station." This judgment settled the question; for John Wesley at once said, "That I can, as a clergyman, better serve God and His Church in my present station, I have all reasonable evidence."* Southey has spoken of the conduct of John Wesley in this case, as "an affair of religious casuistry," in which the interests of his mother and sisters were entirely disregarded. This is unjust. There is nothing in the account, as it stands in the letters of the family, to justify the suspicion that he acted under any influence but that of a stern sense of duty; and as to his mother, it is by no means certain that she desired him to come to Epworth. It is well known, that this pious and energetic woman was not backward in delivering her sentiments on passing events of a public or private nature, when she had formed a judgment respecting them. But here Dr. Whitehead, with all the family documents before him, says, "In the midst of this debate, he (John Wesley) wrote to his mother, without taking the least notice of it: nor do I find that she wrote to him on that subject; which appears extraordinary, if she was of the same opinion with her husband and her son Samuel."†

* WHITEHEAD'S "Life," vol. i., p. 487. † *Ibid.*, p. 488.

The Rev. Samuel Wesley died at Epworth, in April, 1735. He had for some time been manifestly ripening for his departure. John and Charles were both with him in his last hours, and witnessed the calm serenity of his mind, as he passed through his mortal agony. He enjoyed a clear sense of his acceptance with God, and was consequently far in advance of his sons in evangelical knowledge and spiritual attainments. When, therefore, they heard their father, on the bed of death, utter the memorable words, "The inward witness, son, the inward witness; this is the proof, the strongest proof, of Christianity," they understood him not. Yet it was this which sustained the dying saint, and enabled him to say with a smile,—when John asked him, "Are you in much pain?"—"God does chasten me with pain, yea, all my bones with strong pain; but I thank Him for all, I bless Him for all, I love Him for all!"* Although the two sons could not fully understand the nature and extent of their father's godly confidence, they profited by the solemn season, and dwelt in thankful meditation on his triumphant end, many years afterwards.

John and Charles Wesley consent to go as missionaries to Georgia.

John and Charles Wesley now returned to Oxford, and seemed quite safe from any further temptation to remove from that favourite seat of learning and of labour. Yet, strange to say, within six months from the death of their father, the two Wesleys were on their way to the distant colony of Georgia, on the American continent. The man who resisted every inducement to leave Oxford and settle in the place of his birth, in the bosom of his family, to minister to a people who earnestly desired his presence, now consented to leave Oxford and England, for a distant infant colony, to preach to emigrant settlers or barbarous

* JACKSON'S "Life of Charles Wesley," vol. i., p. 34.

Indians. These facts afford an ample refutation of all the censures cast upon John Wesley for declining to apply for the living of Epworth, by proving that he was only influenced by a strong desire to go where he conscientiously believed he could get and do most good.

The origin and object of the colony.

As the colony of Georgia is so intimately connected with the early history of John and Charles Wesley, it may be necessary to state briefly the origin, object, and progress of that colonial settlement. It was formed under royal charter, and comprehended the tract of country extending between the rivers Savannah and Alatamaha on the American continent. The name of Georgia was given to it in compliment to George the Second, under whose auspices it was commenced. The management of the colony was vested in trustees, who were required annually to report their proceedings to the Lord Chancellor of England, and the Lord Chief Justice of the Court of Common Pleas. The design of the undertaking was twofold. It was to be an outlet to the redundant population at home, especially of London: and to be an asylum for such foreign Protestants as were harassed by Popish persecution. James Oglethorpe, Esq., a military man, who was afterwards raised to the rank of general, was made the governor, and intrusted with the organization of the colony. He had taken an active part in obtaining the charter, and was one of the original trustees. He was an enterprising, public-spirited man, and was regarded as kind and benevolent in his disposition. Among the trustees were several pious Presbyterians as well as Churchmen.

This scheme excited great attention at the time. Parliament voted a sum of money to enable the trustees to carry their purpose into effect; and as they were to receive no remuneration for their services, they brought the subject

before the public, and solicited contributions in aid of their object. One of the trustees, Dr. John Burton, Fellow of Corpus Christi College, Oxford, preached a sermon on behalf of this project in the parish church of St. Mary-le-Bow, on Thursday, March 15th, 1732, in which he urged the importance of the proposed measure. Soon after, a quarto volume was published for the same purpose, in which great stress was laid on the piteous case of Protestant Christians in many of the Popish continental states, and the Christian duty and charity of opening a way for their deliverance, and of affording them a refuge where they might worship God in peace.

These appeals were liberally responded to by the more serious part of the English people. The name of Mr. Samuel Wesley, Jun., stands in the list as a subscriber of five guineas to the fund, and as one who would receive subscriptions towards the object. The trustees received, from June, 1732, to June, 1733, the sum of £3,723. 13*s.* 7*d.* in money, besides large quantities of Bibles, Testaments, and other books, household furniture, and divers useful articles. Having made their arrangements, they invited all classes of people to whom emigration was desirable,—Roman Catholics only excepted,—to avail themselves of the advantages which this colony offered. The unemployed poor, bankrupts, and such other persons as were in circumstances of hopeless embarrassment, were offered a free passage; and Mr. Oglethorpe, who had conducted the first settlers, after having remained in the colony fifteen months, returned to England, to take charge of a further supply of emigrants. This gentleman well knew the sterling worth of John and Charles Wesley, having been for a long time a personal friend of the family.

While he was making arrangements for conducting this

second company to Georgia, application was made to some of the Oxford Methodists to settle in the colony as clergymen; and Dr. John Burton pressed Mr. John Wesley to undertake a mission among the Indians in the neighbourhood of the colony. After considerable hesitation, and taking the advice of friends, he consented to go as a missionary to the Indians; and it was finally arranged that Charles should accompany him as secretary to the governor. Till this time Charles had declined taking orders; but he was now ordained, that he might be able to officiate as a clergyman in a regular manner in the colony, where the spiritual interests of the people had been much neglected.*

The motives and design of the Wesleys in this enterprise.

This decision of the two brothers naturally excited very great surprise. Those who thought they knew them best believed that nothing but "stern necessity" could induce John Wesley to leave Oxford. Dr. Coke and Mr. Henry Moore, however, in reply to this supposition, observe, "Had these persons enjoyed the intimacy with Mr. Wesley which we were favoured with, they would have been able easily to account for it. From what has been said, it would appear that Mr. Wesley's mind was deeply impressed with religious sentiments. He had devoted himself entirely to God. It has appeared, also, from his own words, how exceedingly painful all commerce with the world was to him; and that he had deeply imbibed even that undue love of retirement, which all good men have felt more or less, from the Egyptian hermits of the second century down to the elegant and pious Cowley.

"But this was not all. He was at that time an admirer of the mystic writers; and though he had not embraced the peculiar sentiments of those who were grossly unscriptural, —from the time he was *homo unius libri,* as he himself

* Jackson's "Life of Charles Wesley."

terms it, 'a man of one book,' valuing none comparatively but the Bible,—yet he still believed many of the mystic writers were, to use his own words, 'the best explainers of the Gospel of Christ.' And every one knows, as he has remarked, how continually those that are supposed to be the purest of them, cry out, 'To the desert! To the desert!' What wonder, then, if at this time, when having only attained to what St. Paul calls, 'the spirit of bondage unto fear;' when he found every company and almost every person discompose his mind; when he found all his senses ready to betray him into sin, upon every exercise of them; and that all within him, as well as every creature he conversed with, tended to extort that bitter cry, 'O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me?'—what wonder, I say, that he should close in with a proposal which seemed at one stroke to cut him off from both the smiling and frowning world, and to enable him to be dead to the world and crucified with Christ, which he then thought could be only thus attained? This is the account which he himself has given us of his views and motives at this period. It will appear, therefore, that when he consented to go as a missionary to Georgia, he only manifested a continuation and higher exercise of that determined resolution of being separated from the world which he had evinced in his refusal of the living of Epworth. But that he did not hastily agree to leave his pupils, friends, and country, is to be inferred from his own journals, and has been fully explained to us by himself." *

Persons who have never advanced in the experience of religion even as far as John Wesley had attained at this time, will certainly be unable to appreciate this statement, and must, if they will write on the subject, however unin-

* Coke and Moore's "Life of Wesley," p. 92.

tentionally, misrepresent him. And this has been done in numerous instances from his own time to that of Southey. But here is a statement which two witnesses, whose veracity is unimpeachable, declare they received from Mr. Wesley's own lips; not in a single conversation which might be but partially remembered, but in full explanations spread over many years of intimate intercourse and friendly co-operation. And this statement is such as any person who has experienced the salvation of the Gospel, will fully apprehend and receive.

The Rev. Thomas Jackson has put this case before us in a masterly and convincing manner: "Of the purity of their motives, indeed, no doubt can be entertained. They were both happily and usefully employed as college tutors; and had they sought preferment in the Church, considering their acquirements, talents, and connexions, they might doubtless have obtained it. But the fact is, by reading the writings of Mr. Law, and others of a similar kind, they were deeply impressed with the necessity of holiness. According to their apprehensions, true holiness is attained principally by means of sufferings, mental and bodily; and hence they adopted this mode of life, resolved to do and suffer whatever it should please God to lay upon them. Their theological views were not only defective, but erroneous. They understood not the true nature of a sinner's justification before God, nor the faith by which it is obtained, nor its connexion with sanctification. Holiness of heart and life was the object of their eager pursuit; and this they sought, not by faith, but by works and personal austerity, according to the leading doctrine of Mr. Law. 'Our end in leaving our native country,' says Mr. John Wesley, 'was not to avoid want, (God having given us plenty of temporal blessings,) nor to gain the dung and

dross of riches or honour; but singly this,—to save our souls; to live wholly to the glory of God.'" *

John Wesley's deference to his mother in this case. The brothers proceed on their voyage.

It must not, however, be supposed, that in this matter John Wesley overlooked altogether the case of his family, and the claims which his widowed mother, to whom he owed so much, had upon his sympathy and support. On the contrary, when every other objection which he raised had been answered, he mentioned the grief it might give his mother. "I am," said he, "the staff of her age, her chief support and comfort;" and he put this so strongly, that it was only to be met by the inquiry, "Will you go if your mother's consent can be obtained?" Believing this to be impossible, he agreed that she should be consulted. On the question being put to Mrs. Wesley, she said, "If I had twenty sons, I should rejoice that they were all so employed, though I should never see them more:" an answer worthy of the mother and of the son. Wesley now regarded his way as made plain, and thought that in entering on this work he was doing what was the will of God concerning him.

On Tuesday, October 14th, 1735, this party left London for Gravesend, to embark for Georgia. It consisted of John and Charles Wesley, Benjamin Ingham, and Charles Delamotte. On the following Tuesday they sailed from Gravesend, and proceeded on their voyage. The ship which carried the Wesleys contained one hundred and twenty-four persons, men, women, and children, including Mr. Oglethorpe, and twenty-six Germans, members of the Moravian Church, with David Nitschman, their bishop. These pious Germans were going to Georgia, in compliance with the invitation given to persecuted Protestants, that they might enjoy their peculiar religious rites, and extend

* Jackson's "Life of Charles Wesley," vol. i., p. 45.

the blessings of divine knowledge to the neighbouring Indians. Sixteen of their brethren had emigrated to this colony in the preceding year, and were already engaged in this Christian enterprise, under the direction of their ministers.

The Wesleys were always diligent and regular to a proverb. The elder of the brothers has given us the following sketch of their general course of procedure during the voyage: "Our common way of living was this: From four in the morning till five each of us used private prayer. From five to seven we read the Bible together, carefully comparing it (that we might not lean to our own understandings) with the writings of the earliest ages. At seven we breakfasted. At eight were the public prayers. From nine to twelve I usually learned German, and Mr. Delamotte Greek. My brother writ sermons, and Mr. Ingham instructed the children. At twelve we met to give an account to one another what we had done since our last meeting, and what we designed to do before our next. About one we dined. The time from dinner to four we spent in reading to those whom each of us had taken in charge, or in speaking to them severally, as need required. At four were the evening prayers; when either the second lesson was explained, (as it always was in the morning,) or the children were catechized and instructed before the congregation. From five to six we again used private prayer. From six to seven I read in our cabin to two or three of the passengers, (of whom there were about eighty English on board,) and each of my brethren to a few more in theirs. At seven I joined with the Germans in their public service; while Mr. Ingham was reading between the decks, to as many as desired to hear. At eight we met again, to exhort and instruct one another. Between nine and ten we went

Their employment at sea.

to bed, where neither the roaring of the sea, nor the motion of the ship, could take away the refreshing sleep which God gave us." *

Pious confidence of the Germans.

During this voyage John Wesley was very much surprised and impressed with the conduct of the poor Germans. Some of them would perform the most servile offices for their fellow-passengers, for which they neither desired nor would receive any pay, saying, "It was good for their proud hearts, and their loving Saviour had done more for them." They bore opposition and injury without resistance or retaliation: but what affected him most was their conduct in a violent storm. "There was now," he observes, "an opportunity of trying whether they were delivered from the spirit of fear, as well as from that of pride, anger, and revenge. In the midst of the psalm wherewith their service began, the sea broke over, split the main-sail in pieces, covered the ship, and poured in between the decks, as if the great deep had already swallowed us up. A terrible screaming began amongst the English. The Germans calmly sung on. I asked one of them afterwards, 'Was you not afraid?' He answered, 'I thank God, no!' I asked, 'But were not your women and children afraid?' He replied mildly, 'No: our women and children are not afraid to die.'" †

The vessel reached the Savannah river on the afternoon of Thursday, March 5th. On the next day, Wesley, the governor, and others landed on an island, and, kneeling down, returned thanks to God for their protection during the voyage. Mr. Oglethorpe then took a boat and went up to Savannah, and returned the following morning with Mr. Spangenberg, one of the German pastors. Wesley soon perceived his piety and spirit, and requested his advice

* "Journal," October 21st, 1735. † *Ibid.*, January 25th, 1736.

as to his own conduct. "'My brother,'" said the German, "'I must first ask you one or two questions. Have you the witness in yourself? Does the Spirit of God bear witness with your spirit that you are a child of God?' I was surprised, and knew not what to answer. He observed it, and asked, 'Do you know Jesus Christ?' I paused, and said, 'I know He is the Saviour of the world.' 'True,' replied he, 'but do you know He has saved you?' I answered, 'I hope He has died to save me.' He only added, 'Do you know yourself?' I said, 'I do.' But I fear they were vain words." *

John Wesley finds it impossible to preach to the Indians.

The first disappointment which John Wesley met with, was to learn the impossibility of preaching the Gospel to the Indians, which was the object for which he left England. About a week after he landed, he had an interview with Tomo Chachi, the Indian chief who had been taken to England by Mr. Oglethorpe, and presented to George II. and his queen. He addressed Mr. Wesley by an interpreter thus: "I am glad you are come. When I was in England, I desired that some should speak the great word to me, and my nation then desired to hear it; but now we are all in confusion. Yet I am glad you are come. I will go up and speak to the wise men of our nation, and I hope they will hear. But we would not be made Christians as the Spaniards make Christians: we would be taught before we are baptized." † The chief accordingly went to his people; but although Wesley afterward had occasional conversations with some of the Indians, the way was never opened for his commencing a mission among them. In consequence of this, the brothers separated: Charles Wesley proceeded to Frederica, where Mr. Oglethorpe principally resided, while John Wesley began to preach at Savannah.

* "Journal," February 7th, 1736. † *Ibid.*, February 14th, 1736.

John and Charles Wesley minister to the colonists unsuccessfully.

Never did two ministers enter upon their work with more zeal and assiduity—and but seldom with equal natural talents—than did the two Wesleys in Georgia. Charles conducted four religious services every day, for the benefit of those who chose, and had leisure, to attend: and he was in the habit of giving an extemporary exposition of the lessons at the morning and evening prayer. As no church had been built, those services were generally conducted in the open air. Meanwhile, John Wesley and Mr. Delamotte were no less diligently employed at Savannah. They agreed to advise the more serious among them "to form themselves into a sort of little society, and to meet once or twice a week, in order to reprove, instruct, and exhort one another; to select out of these a smaller number for a more intimate union with each other, which might be forwarded, partly by our conversing singly with each, and partly by our inviting them all together to our house: and this accordingly we determined to do every Sunday, in the afternoon." Wesley began his ministry by dividing the public prayers according to the original appointment of the Church. The morning service began at five; the communion office with the sermon at eleven; and the evening service about three. He also commenced visiting all the inhabitants of the parish from house to house; and this he determined to do at the time when the excessive heat prevented them from working, between twelve o'clock and three in the afternoon.*

Yet it is a notorious fact, which ought to be freely and fully acknowledged, that neither of the brothers was successful in his efforts. As far as regards the great end for which the Christian ministry was instituted, they laboured in vain. Why was this? Dr. Southey evidently attributes

* "Journal," May, 1736.

their failure to their ascetic habits, their ecclesiastical harshness, and the innovations which they introduced. It is true, they did lay themselves open to grave reflection on some of these grounds. They insisted, according to the rubric, but contrary to the practice of the Church of England, upon baptizing infants by immersion. Nor could they be induced to depart from this mode unless the parents would certify that the child was weakly. Persons were not allowed to act as sponsors, unless they were communicants. No baptism was recognised as valid, unless it was performed by a minister episcopally ordained; and those who had allowed their children to be baptized in any other manner, were earnestly exhorted to have them re-baptized. One of the most pious men in the colony John Wesley refused to receive at the communion, because according to these views he had not been baptized in an orthodox manner. In his Journal under the date, "September 29th, 1749," he inserts a letter which he had received from John Martin Bolzius, on which he thus remarks: "What a truly Christian piety and simplicity breathe in these lines! And yet this very man, when I was at Savannah, did I refuse to admit to the Lord's table, because he was not baptized; that is, not baptized by a minister who had been episcopally ordained. Can any one carry High-Church zeal higher than this? And how well have I been since beaten with mine own staff!" So, also, he refused to read the burial service over the body of a person whose baptism, for the same reason, was in his judgment invalid. There can be no doubt that a rigid adherence to such external forms, so alien from the genius of the Gospel, would to a serious extent mar the ministry of any man. It is equally certain, that the ascetic practices of the Wesleys would be likely to produce an

Causes of their failure.

unfavourable effect. Refusing the comfort of a bed, they slept on the ground. Finding they could live on bread, they rejected all besides as luxuries. To countenance the poor boys in his school, John Wesley went barefooted. Yet, notwithstanding all these extravagant practices, and even that which Southey seems to have regarded as the much greater imprudence of having prayers about the same time that "one of the better order of colonists gave a ball," by which means the ball-room was kept so empty that the entertainment could not go forward,—it does not appear that the secret of their failure consisted principally in this part of their conduct.

On the contrary, there can be no doubt that Mr. Jackson has correctly apprehended and clearly stated the case in the following important passage. Speaking of Charles Wesley, he says, "The principal cause of his want of success is doubtless to be found in the defectiveness of his theological views, and, consequently, of his own piety. Several of the sermons which he preached at Frederica are still extant in his neat and elegant hand-writing. The doctrines which they contain are precisely those of Mr. Law. The pleasures of the world are all vain and sinful, and therefore to be renounced; the evils of our nature render us unfit for the service and enjoyment of God, and are to be mortified by fasting, prayer, and a constant course of universal self-denial; we are the creatures of God, and are, therefore, to devote ourselves to Him in body, soul, and spirit, with the utmost fervour, simplicity, and purity of intention. In these discourses, as in the eloquent volumes of Law, we look in vain for correct and impressive views of the atonement and intercession of Christ, and of the offices of the Holy Spirit. It cannot here be said, 'Christ is all and in all!' No satisfactory answer is given to the question,

'What must I do to be saved?' Men are required to run the race of Christian holiness with a load of uncancelled guilt on their consciences, and while the corruptions of their nature are unsubdued by renewing grace. The preacher has no adequate conception of a sinner's justification before God. He sometimes confounds this blessing with sanctification; and at other times he speaks of it as a something which is to take place in the day of judgment. Never does he represent it as consisting in the full and unmerited forgiveness of all past sins, obtained not by works of righteousness, but by the simple exercise of faith in a penitent state of the heart, and immediately followed by the gift of the Holy Ghost, producing peace of conscience, the filial spirit, power over all sin, and the joyous hope of eternal life. On the contrary, he satisfies himself with reproving the vices and sins of the people with unsparing severity, and with holding up the standard of practical holiness; denouncing the divine vengeance against all who fall short of it; but without directing them to the only means by which they can obtain forgiveness and a new heart. The consequence was, that the more serious part of the people were discouraged; for they were called to the hopeless task of presenting to God a spiritual service, while they were themselves the servants of sin; and of loving Him with all their heart, while they were strangers to His forgiving mercy, and laboured under a just apprehension of His wrath. Charles's ministry, like that of his brother, at this time did not embody those great doctrines of the evangelical dispensation which constitute 'the truth as it is in Jesus,' and upon which the Holy Ghost is wont to set His seal, by making them instrumental in the conversion and salvation of men. The quickening energy of the Spirit, therefore, without which all human efforts are unavailing,

was in a great measure withheld. The brothers, with the best possible intentions, laboured to repair the 'old garment,' by 'sewing' upon it 'new' and unfulled 'cloth,' which was stiff and unwrought; but as it neither agreed with the old in colour, nor in quality, it 'took from the old, and the rent was made worse.' To use another illustration deduced from our Lord, they spent their time and strength in 'putting new wine into old' leathern 'bottles;' where it no sooner began to ferment than 'the bottles were marred, and the wine was spilled.'" *

This was the reason why the Wesleys laboured unsuccessfully in Georgia. And their failure was all the more signal, on account of the isolation and peculiarity of the situation in that raw and unsettled colony. In this country it would hardly have been possible for the result to be so strongly marked. There, in an infant community, with society scarcely formed, the people few in number, influenced by petty jealousies and rivalries, and consisting, to a considerable extent, of reckless and unprincipled persons, nothing but the "power of God unto salvation" could have given them success. And without this, the zeal, sincerity, and perseverance with which these devout ministers urged holiness on the people, only served to show more clearly that they were attempting an impossibility.

They met with other causes of disquiet and danger, although, perhaps, most of these had some connexion with the character they evinced, and the conduct they pursued. Charles had not been acting in the colony as secretary to the governor a week, before he became an object of suspicion and dislike to persons who endeavoured to ruin him in the estimation of his chief. Few infant colonies have been raised up under such a standard of morals as John

* "Life of Charles Wesley," vol. i., p. 54.

and Charles Wesley preached, and which the latter carried into the duties of his secular office as secretary to the governor. Their conduct and efforts were therefore generally regarded as intolerable.

It has been said, that General Oglethorpe saw the character of John Wesley's mind, and the use to which his talents might be turned in the colony, on their outward voyage; but despaired of employing him successfully whilst he remained so rigidly religious; and that, in the hope of inducing some alteration in this respect, he caused measures to be taken with the view of drawing him into a matrimonial engagement. Whether this conjecture be well founded or otherwise, it is certain that, whilst in the colony, both John and Charles Wesley were placed in circumstances of great delicacy, and danger to their ministerial reputation. Oglethorpe no doubt was imposed upon, for a short time, by artful misrepresentations concerning the Wesleys; and his servants in the mean time, but probably without his concurrence, treated Charles with the most heartless cruelty. The mischievous plot was soon discovered; and though Charles immediately retired from Georgia, he never lost his friendship for the general. But if any such scheme as that alluded to above was formed and acted on, it failed. The two brothers adhered to their principles and their pious practices; and although they suffered much annoyance, pain, and danger in the colony from various causes, they extricated themselves with honour from all the snares by which they were surrounded, and left the country not only with increased experience, but with unstained integrity.

Their return to England.

Charles Wesley arrived in England on the 3rd of December, 1736, and received a hearty welcome from his friends, whom he visited in succession as soon as his

health—which was far from being good—permitted. London, Oxford, and Tiverton occupied him for some weeks.

John Wesley returned on the 1st of February, 1738, nearly one year and two months after his brother. On reaching the land of his birth, he records the state of his heart in the following memorable words: "It is now two years and almost four months since I left my native country to teach the Georgian Indians the nature of Christianity; but what have I learned myself in the mean time? Why, (what I the least of all suspected,) that I, who went to America to convert others, was never myself converted to God."* The religious reader will perceive here,—what, indeed, Wesley indicated by a foot-note to this passage in his "Journal," namely,—that the sense in which this assertion is strictly correct, is that which makes the term "converted" set forth the state of a person who by faith in Christ had obtained a sense of pardon, and the witness of the Holy Spirit to his adoption and spiritual regeneration. In the general sense in which the word is often used, as implying a turning from sin to God, it could not be said that Wesley had never up to this time been converted.

* "Journal," February 1st, 1738.

CHAPTER IV.

THE CONVERSION OF JOHN AND CHARLES WESLEY, AND THEIR PERSONAL INTERCOURSE WITH THE MORAVIANS.

Importance of this subject.

THERE is scarcely a subject which can be discussed in religious literature, of more momentous importance than the conversion of John Wesley; meaning, as we do, by this term, his obtaining a clear sense of the forgiveness of his sins, the witness of the Holy Ghost to his adoption as a child of God, and a consequent change of heart.

He was a man of undoubted capacity, of acute and energetic intellect, and of great learning; one who from his youth had maintained a strictly moral and virtuous deportment, and who was known as a strenuous upholder of the most rigid ecclesiastical order. Yet this man, possessing all these advantages, and conscious that he has earnestly endeavoured to do the will of God, is very unhappy,—indeed, a subject of great spiritual misery. He feels the sentence of death in himself,—knows that he is not prepared for heaven. Is this statement compatible with the doctrines of the New Testament? or is it a fit subject for ridicule and sarcasm? It was well observed by Richard Watson, that the manner in which Dr. Southey treated this case, was as unjust to Christianity as to Wesley and Methodism. That we may avoid a similar error, and afford a clear, consistent, and scriptural narrative of this change of heart, in which was involved the origin of Methodism, it will be desirable to adhere as closely as possible to the account which Wesley himself has given of

his views and feelings in the state of transition, and which, without variation, he published to the world many times during his life, and left to posterity as a permanent and authentic narrative when he died.

The strong language in which he expressed his sense of condemnation and danger, on his arrival in England from America, was given at the close of the last chapter; nor was this in any way modified after he had been a few weeks in this country. Writing in his Journal on February 7th, 1738, he calls it "a day much to be remembered," because on it he first held personal intercourse with Peter Böhler, a young German minister, who had just landed in England; and with whose piety, intelligence, and spirit, he was so much pleased, that he adds, "From this time I did not willingly lose any opportunity of conversing with him while I staid in London." Accordingly he had several other interviews with this pious German during the ensuing two or three weeks; and having gone to Oxford to visit his brother Charles, who was ill there, he says, under date of March 4th, "I found my brother at Oxford, recovering from his pleurisy, and with him Peter Böhler, by whom, in the hand of the great God, I was on Sunday, the 5th, clearly convinced of unbelief, of the want of that faith whereby alone we are saved." With this conviction it was suggested to his mind that he should discontinue preaching; but from this course Böhler earnestly dissuaded him. Wesley complied with his advice, and, wherever he went, diligently and, to the full extent of the spiritual light he had received, faithfully preached "the truth as it is in Jesus." On the 10th, Böhler returned to London, Wesley contributing six shillings from his scanty store toward his expenses.* On Thursday, March 23rd, he wrote

Wesley meets with Peter Böhler.

* "Wesleyan Methodist Magazine for 1854," p. 688.

in his Journal: "I met Peter again, who now amazed me more and more, by the accounts he gave of the fruits of living faith,—the holiness and happiness which he affirmed to attend it. The next morning I began the Greek Testament again, resolving to abide by 'the law and the testimony,' and being confident that God would hereby show me whether this doctrine was of God." On the first of the following April, we read in his Journal, "Being at Mr. Fox's Society, my heart was so full that I could not confine myself to the forms of prayer which we were accustomed to use there. Neither do I purpose to be confined to them any more; but to pray indifferently, with a form or without, as may be suitable to particular occasions." On the following day, being the Sabbath, he speaks of his ministerial labours, and adds, "I see the promise; but it is afar off."

On Saturday, April 22nd, this entry is found in his Journal: "I met Peter Böhler once more. I had now no objection to what he said on the nature of faith; namely, that it is (to use the words of our Church) 'a sure trust and confidence which a man hath in God, that through the merits of Christ his sins are forgiven, and he reconciled to the favour of God.' Neither could I deny the happiness or holiness which he described as fruits of this living faith. 'The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God,' and, 'He that believeth hath the witness in himself,' fully convinced me of the former: as, 'Whatsoever is born of God doth not commit sin,' and, 'Whosoever believeth is born of God,' did of the latter. But I could not comprehend what he spoke of an instantaneous work. I could not understand how this faith should be given in a moment; how a man could at once be thus turned from darkness to light, from sin and misery to

righteousness and joy in the Holy Ghost. I searched the Scriptures again, touching this very thing, particularly the Acts of the Apostles: to my astonishment I found scarce any instances there of other than instantaneous conversions; scarce any so slow as that of St. Paul, who was three days in the pangs of the new birth. I had but one retreat left; namely, 'Thus, I grant, God wrought in the first ages of Christianity; but the times are changed. What reason have I to believe He works in the same manner now?'

"But on Sunday, 23rd, I was beat out of this retreat too, by the concurring evidence of several living witnesses; who testified God had thus wrought in themselves, giving them in a moment such a faith in the blood of His Son, as translated them out of darkness into light, out of sin and fear into holiness and happiness. Here ended my disputing. I could now only cry out, 'Lord, help Thou my unbelief!'"

Following the entries made in Wesley's Journal bearing upon this subject, we find him expressing himself thus, on Monday, May 1st: "The return of my brother's illness obliged me again to hasten to London. In the evening I found him at James Hutton's, better as to his health than I expected; but strongly averse from what he called 'the new faith.'" But after the interval of a single day, this entry is found: "Wednesday, May 3rd.—My brother had a long and particular conversation with Peter Böhler. And it now pleased God to open his eyes; so that he also saw clearly what was the nature of that one true living faith, whereby alone 'through grace we are saved!'"

Is fully convinced of his own spiritual destitution.

While John Wesley was thus seeking the salvation of God, he described his state of mind, in a letter to a friend, in the following words: "I feel what you say, though not enough; for I am under the same condemnation. I see

that the whole law of God is holy, just, and good. I know every thought, every temper of my soul, ought to bear God's image and superscription. But how am I fallen from the glory of God! I feel that I am sold under sin! I know that I too deserve nothing but wrath, being full of all abominations; and having no good thing in me to atone for them, or to remove the wrath of God. All my works, my righteousness, my prayers, need an atonement for themselves. So that my mouth is stopped. I have nothing to plead. God is holy, I am unholy. God is a consuming fire: I am altogether a sinner, meet to be consumed.

"Yet I hear a voice, (and is it not the voice of God?) saying, 'Believe, and thou shalt be saved. He that believeth is passed from death unto life. God so loved the world that He gave His only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life!'

"O let no one deceive us by vain words, as if we had already attained this faith! (That is, the proper Christian faith.) By its fruits we shall know. Do we already feel 'peace with God,' and 'joy in the Holy Ghost?' Does 'His Spirit bear witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God?' Alas! with mine He does not; nor, I fear, with yours. O thou Saviour of men, save us from trusting in anything but Thee! Draw us after Thee! Let us be emptied of ourselves, and then fill us with peace and joy in believing; and let nothing separate us from Thy love, in time or in eternity!"

These views and feelings of Wesley contrary to prevailing systems of belief.

Thus Wesley described his views and feelings, while earnestly seeking after a sense of God's forgiving love. It is very certain, that the prominent expressions here used may, by an experienced writer, be so employed in a continued narrative, as that, with all appearance of candour, the exhi-

bition will amount to nothing more than a caricature of the original; and this has been often done. But let the whole account be fairly taken, and then the question comes, Is there anything here contrary to the plain teaching of the word of God? Those who so believe in sacramental efficacy, as to imagine that, when baptism is properly administered, the recipient is born again into newness of life, and that of this spiritual life it can be said, "That life may through our negligence afterward decay, or be choked, or smothered, or well nigh extinguished, and by God's mercy again be renewed and refreshed; but a *commencement* of life in CHRIST, after baptism, 'a death unto sin and a new birth unto righteousness,' at any other period than at that one introduction into God's covenant, is as little consonant with the general representations of Holy Scripture, as a commencement of physical life, long after our natural birth, is with the order of His Providence;"*—those who entertain these views will of course consider the language of Wesley as extravagant and mistaken. And so will those who regard an external compliance with the precepts of the Bible as the end of the law for righteousness. Such persons will see, in a man of Wesley's character, no cause for this deep searching of heart,—this agonizing desire for a spiritual life; and consequently to them all his highly expressive and descriptive language must appear fanatical and enthusiastic. Nor will the mystic, who looks to solitude, tranquillity, repose, and ascetic observances and sufferings, as the means by which the latent virtues of the internal word are to be excited, and to make known to his mind divine things, look with more complacency on the case under consideration. But this is not the place to discuss the relative

* DR. PUSEY On Baptism, p. 28.

error or excellence of these several schemes. It is sufficient to refer to them, for the purpose of showing that such persons as hold them,—and they are very numerous in this country,—must, to be consistent, see in the language of Wesley, and in the state of mind which it describes, something incomprehensible, unmeaning, and extravagant.

Yet quite consistent with Scripture and reason.

They, however, who regard man as by nature "dead in trespasses and sins, guilty before God, condemned already," and believe that the means of his spiritual cure are not ceremonial or ritual, will see in the language and conduct of Wesley a beautiful and appropriate exhibition of scriptural truth. He had been baptized in the most orthodox manner, and had been very carefully brought up by wise and pious parents. Yet, from the time he was about ten years of age, his conscience was burdened with a sense of sin; and notwithstanding his diligence in study, his earnest desire to serve God, and his labours and perils in that service, he deeply and painfully felt that all these could not commend him to the divine favour. He panted to receive "the atonement," to realize "redemption through the blood of Christ, even the forgiveness of sins," that he might be "translated from the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of God's dear Son."

And this blessed privilege was fully obtained. Wesley thus describes the close of his earnest and long-continued struggle: "I continued thus to seek it (though with strange indifference, dulness, and coldness, and unusually frequent relapses into sin) till Wednesday, May 24th. I think it was about five o'clock this morning, that I opened my Testament on those words, 'There are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises, even that ye should be partakers of the divine nature.' (2 Peter i. 4.) Just as I went out, I opened it again on these words, 'Thou art

not far from the kingdom of God.' In the afternoon I was asked to go to St. Paul's. The anthem was :—

'Out of the deep have I called unto Thee, O Lord: Lord, hear my voice.
O let thine ears consider well: the voice of my complaint.
If thou, Lord, wilt be extreme to mark what is done amiss: O Lord, who may abide it?
For there is mercy with Thee: therefore shalt Thou be feared.
O Israel, trust in the Lord, for with the Lord there is mercy: and with Him is plenteous redemption.
And He shall redeem Israel: from all his sins.'

"In the evening I went very unwillingly to a Society in Aldersgate Street, where one was reading Luther's Preface to the Epistle to the Romans. About a quarter before nine, while he was describing the change which God works in the heart through faith in Christ, I felt my heart strangely warmed. I felt I did trust in Christ, Christ alone, for salvation: and an assurance was given me, that He had taken away my sins, even mine, and saved me from the law of sin and death.

He obtains a clear sense of pardoning mercy.

"I began to pray with all my might for those who had in a more especial manner despitefully used me and persecuted me. I then testified openly to all there, what I now first felt in my heart. But it was not long before the enemy suggested, 'This cannot be faith; for where is thy joy?' Then was I taught, that peace and victory over sin are essential to faith in the Captain of our salvation; but that, as to the transports of joy that usually attend the beginning of it, especially in those who have mourned deeply, God sometimes giveth, sometimes withholdeth them, according to the counsels of His own will.

"After my return home I was much buffeted with temptations; but cried out, and they fled away. They returned again and again. I as often lifted up my eyes,

and 'He sent me help from His holy place.' And herein I found the difference between this and my former state chiefly consisted:—I was striving, yea, fighting with all my might under the law, as well as under grace. But *then*, I was sometimes, if not often, conquered; *now*, I was always conqueror." "His experience," says Richard Watson, "nurtured by habitual prayer, and deepened by unwearied exertion in the cause of his Saviour, settled into that steadfast faith and solid peace, which the grace of God perfected in him to the close of his long and active life."

His religious experience vindicated.

It is not to be expected that such spiritual desires and exercises will be recognised by the learning and philosophy of the world. If there be any reality in this case, it presents to our view an enlightened mind, led on under the influence of the Holy Ghost, until, "through the faith of the operation of God," he obtained "the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace." It is not only a possible but a very easy task to show, that every step in this process is in precise accordance with the express teaching of the New Testament: this, indeed, is done in Wesley's account; for the word of God was his constant guide. It is neither easy nor possible to give men, however learned or intellectual, consistent views of these deeply spiritual exercises, if they persist in seeing all these mental phenomena through the medium of earthly wisdom, and judging of them by the standard of a self-sufficient human philosophy. For "the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." If such persons will discuss and criticize a case like that now under consideration, they may fitly be addressed in the emphatic language of Scripture: "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and *thou*

hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh or whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit." It need not therefore excite surprise that, when referring to Wesley's allusion to the temptation of his spiritual enemy, Dr. Southey should observe, "How many a thought arising from the instinctive logic which is grounded on common sense, has been fathered upon the personified principle of evil!" nor that, when speaking of Wesley's profession of having received an assurance of the divine favour, Coleridge should say, that he is led "to conclude that this assurance amounted to little more than a strong *pulse*, a throb of sensibility accompanying a vehement *volition* of acquiescence." It is not intended here to defend the doctrine of the proper personality of Satan, in opposition to the former of these learned men; nor that of the efficient operation of the Holy Ghost in the work of conversion, in contradiction to the judgment of the latter; but simply to affirm the absurdity of dealing with a subject like this under the influence of such principles. It would be as sensible and consistent for any person to attempt a commentary on the Bible on the theory of absolute atheism, as to canvass the religious experience and labours of John Wesley on the principle that there is no tempting devil, nor any enlightening, saving, and witnessing Holy Spirit.

The conversion of Charles Wesley.

A few days before John Wesley obtained a sense of pardoning mercy, his brother Charles had realized the same blessing. From the day of his being convinced of his unbelief, he had been earnestly seeking the Lord. During this time he was taken ill of pleurisy. When first seized, he was at Oxford, and was brought very near the gates of death; but he rallied and came to London. On May 3rd, he was given to see his own spiritual condition, and the necessity of a simple faith in Christ, to which he had before been

very strongly opposed. This change in his religious views rendered it necessary for him to change his lodgings. Previously, when either his brother or himself was in town, they lodged at the house of Mr. Hutton, a clergyman, where they were very hospitably entertained. But this gentleman and his wife were greatly opposed to the evangelical views which the Wesleys had imbibed from the Moravians, especially as their grown-up son and daughter evidently regarded these opinions with favour; and as Charles Wesley was at this time so weak as to be obliged to be carried in a chair, and was earnestly seeking the Lord under great trouble and anxiety of mind, it became essential that he should lodge where at least he would be free from all controversy, and where, if possible, he might have some aid in his spiritual exercises, as well as kindness and care in his bodily weakness. He found all this in the house of Mr. Bray, a brazier, in Little Britain, near Smithfield. Charles Wesley called him "an ignorant mechanic;" but he, notwithstanding, greatly rejoiced in his society, and received him as a benefaction from God. He says, "God sent Mr. Bray to me, a poor ignorant mechanic, who knows nothing but Christ; yet, by knowing Him, knows and discerns all things." Bray was, indeed, a happy believer in the Lord Jesus, living in the spirit of faith, and prayer, and love; and was able, from his own personal experience, as well as from the sacred volume, to teach even the accomplished collegian "the way of the Lord more perfectly." *

Charles Wesley, lying on his sick bed in a state of great weakness, availed himself of this and every other means of spiritual instruction that offered, and earnestly sought to realize the promise of salvation. After having passed many

* JACKSON'S "Life of Charles Wesley," vol. i., pp. 128–130.

days in this state of mind, the following entry is found in his Journal: "May 19th.—At five this morning the pain and difficulty of breathing returned. The surgeon was sent for, but I fell asleep before he could bleed me a second time. I received the sacrament, but not Christ.

"Mrs. Turner came, and told me I should not rise from the bed till I believed. I believed her saying, and asked, 'Has God then bestowed faith upon you?' 'Yes, He has.' 'Why, have you peace with God?' 'Yes, perfect peace.' 'And do you love Christ above all things?' 'I do, above all things incomparably!' 'Then are you willing to die?' 'I am; and would be glad to die this moment; for I know all my sins are blotted out; the handwriting that was against me is taken out of the way, and nailed to the cross. He has saved me by His death; He has washed me by His blood; He has hid me in His wounds. I have peace in Him, and rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory.' Her answers were so full, to those and the most searching questions I could ask, that I had no doubt of her having received the atonement, and waited for it myself with a more assured hope." *

The above took place on Friday. The next day he was rather worse, and his friends were apprehensive that his end was near. The following day was Whit-Sunday. His brother John and a few friends met together on the Saturday evening, and spent the night in prayer on his behalf.

On the Sunday morning Charles wrote thus: "May 21st, 1738.—I waked in hope and expectation of His coming. At night my brother and some friends came and sang a hymn to the Holy Ghost. My comfort and hope were hereby increased. In about half an hour they went. I betook myself to prayer; the substance as follows:

* Jackson's "Life of Charles Wesley," vol. i., p. 133.

'O Jesus, Thou hast said, *I will come unto you.* Thou hast said, *I will send the Comforter unto you.* Thou hast said, *My Father and I will come unto you, and make Our abode with you.* Thou art God, who canst not lie. I wholly rely upon Thy most true promise. Accomplish it in Thy time and manner.' Having said this, I was composing myself to sleep in quietness and peace, when I heard one come in, (Mrs. Musgrave, I thought, by the voice,) and say, 'In the name of Jesus of Nazareth, arise, and believe, and thou shalt be healed of all thy infirmities!' I wondered how it should enter into her head to speak in that manner. The words struck me to the heart. I sighed, and said within myself, 'O that Christ would but speak thus to me!' I lay musing and trembling; then I rang, and, Mrs. Turner coming, I desired her to send up Mrs. Musgrave. She went down, and returning said, Mrs. Musgrave had not been here. My heart sunk within me at the word; and I hoped it might be Christ indeed. However, I sent her down again to inquire, and felt in the mean time a strange palpitation of heart; and said, yet feared to say, 'I believe, I believe.'

"She came up again, and said, 'It was I, a weak sinful creature, that spoke; but the words were Christ's. He commanded me to say them; and so constrained me, that I could not forbear.'

"I sent for Mr. Bray, and asked him whether I believed. He answered, I ought not to doubt of it. It was Christ that spoke to me. He knew it, and willed us to pray together. 'But first,' said he, 'I will read what I have casually opened upon: *Blessed is the man whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man unto whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile.*' Still I felt a violent opposi-

tion and reluctance to believe; yet still the Spirit of God strove with my own and the evil spirit, till by degrees He chased away the darkness of my unbelief. I found myself convinced, I knew not how, nor when, and immediately fell to intercession."

"The fact is, this plain illiterate woman had a deep and solemn conviction that she ought thus to address the afflicted penitent, who was weeping and praying for pardon, peace, and holiness; but recollecting that he was a scholar and a clergyman, she was afraid to do it. She durst not speak to him in this manner face to face, and with difficulty prevailed upon herself to utter these words as she stood upon the stairs. By this humble instrumentality, it pleased God to produce in the heart of His servant the vital faith which he so earnestly desired." Charles Wesley closes his narrative of his conversion in these words: "I now found myself at peace with God, and rejoiced in hope of loving Christ. My temper, for the rest of the day, was mistrust of my own great but unknown weakness. I saw that by faith I stood; and the continual support of faith, which kept me from falling, though of myself I am ever sinking into sin. I went to bed still sensible of my own weakness, (I humbly hope to be more and more so,) yet confident of Christ's protection."* This took place on the Sunday before the conversion of John Wesley, which occurred on the Wednesday afterward.

Wesley visits the Moravian settlements in Germany.

Whilst John Wesley was in Georgia, he had determined to seize the first favourable opportunity of visiting the Moravians in their German home. About a fortnight after his conversion he resolved to carry this resolution into effect. Having made the necessary preparation, he sailed from the Thames for Rotterdam, and proceeded thence to

* JACKSON'S "Life of Charles Wesley," vol. i., p. 135.

Marienborn, where he staid about a fortnight, and was introduced by Count Zinzendorf to the Count of Solms and his family. In this neighbourhood many of the pious Moravians had settled. "Here," Wesley says, "I continually met with what I sought for,—living proofs of the power of faith: persons saved from inward as well as outward sin, 'by the love of God shed abroad in their hearts;' and from all doubt and fear, by the abiding witness of 'the Holy Ghost given unto them.'" After enjoying the society of these Christian people, and obtaining from Count Zinzendorf and the Brethren their opinions on those doctrines respecting which he felt the deepest interest, he proceeded to Herrnhut, the principal settlement of the Moravian Church, in Saxon Lusatia.

This Christian sect, and its leading ministers and prominent doctrines, had so great an influence in directing the piety and preparing the mind of Wesley for his important evangelical work, that it becomes necessary to give some information respecting their origin, progress, and character.

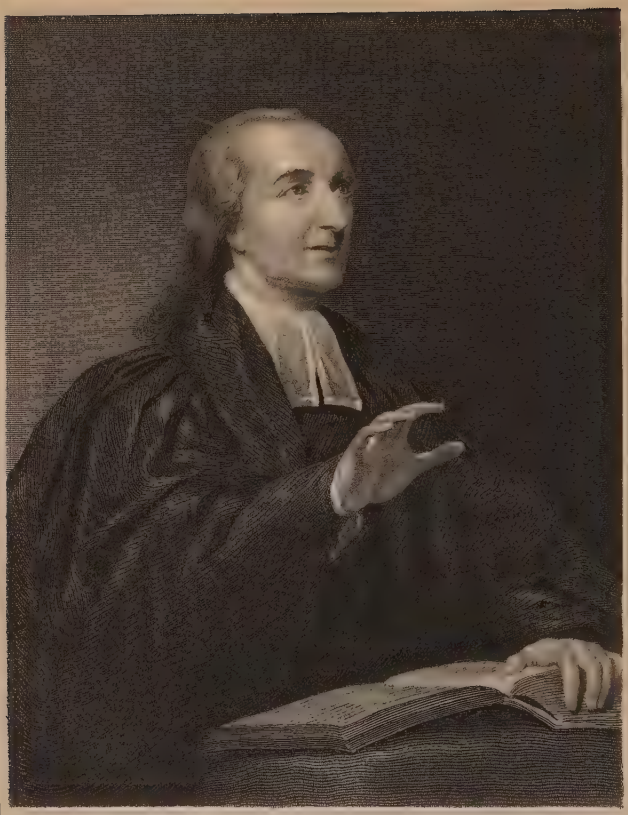
Origin of the Moravian Church.

The Christian faith was introduced into Bohemia by Greek missionaries, and the services of religion were at first conducted in the language of the country. But after Otho the Great had extended the influence of the empire, this privilege was withdrawn; because, said the Pope, it "still pleases Almighty God to direct His worship in hidden language, that not every one, especially the simple, might understand it. For if it were performed in a manner altogether intelligible, it might easily be exposed to contempt; or, if imperfectly understood by half-learned persons, it might happen that, hearing and contemplating the word too frequently, errors might be engendered in the hearts of the people, which would not be easily eradicated. Therefore, what your people ignorantly require, can in no wise

be conceded to them; and we now forbid it by the power of God and His holy apostle Peter." There are ample reasons for believing, that, although this authority was sufficient to seal up the ordinances of worship, so that they could no longer minister instruction to the people, the logic of this mandate by no means convinced the Bohemian Christians that this change was for their benefit. They cherished the recollection of their old customs, and many still practised them in privacy. Hence, when some of the Waldenses sought refuge in Bohemia from fiery persecution, they found persons who, if not prepared to unite in all their views, were fully disposed to receive their most important doctrines with favour. This was the reason why, when the writings of Wickliffe appeared, they made a more immediate impression in Bohemia than in England, or indeed in any other country. Bohemia produced John Huss, the first martyr of the Protestant Reformation, and Jerome of Prague, who was, perhaps, the greatest.

Noble struggle of Bohemia against Papal tyranny.

The judicial murder of these good men, acting on the minds of multitudes who before had deeply felt the galling bondage of the Papal yoke, determined the Bohemians to draw the sword, and appeal to its power for deliverance and liberty. As Dr. Southey justly observes, the story of this religious war "ought to be written in a popular form, and read in all countries." Never were greater efforts made or more heroism displayed by a people in support of their religious liberties. John Zisca was at first the inspiring genius of the movement. He collected and disciplined the Bohemian peasantry; and resisted the utmost efforts of the Emperor Siegmund to take upon him the government of the country. Zisca had but one eye at the beginning of the contest, and he lost that one by a wound from an arrow, about a year after the beginning of the war. Yet,



blind as he was, he continued to take his place at the head of his troops, and conducted the struggle two years longer with such spirit and success, that the emperor was constrained to meet him on an equal footing for the purpose of negotiating terms of peace. Before these arrangements were completed, Zisca died; his death broke off the treaty, and the war was carried on eleven years longer, when it was concluded by the treaty of Prague, in 1433, which secured to the Bohemians the use of the cup in the holy Eucharist, and the administration of worship in their own language. But these conditions were not performed. The Popish party, having obtained power, deliberately planned a systematic persecution of those who held religious opinions at variance with their own. This cruel measure issued in the banishment of multitudes from their native land. At first the severity only affected the upper classes; for the common people, being regarded as belonging to the soil, were not permitted to follow their superiors into exile, however much they might share their opinions and desire religious liberty.

A century later the labours of Luther again excited a strong desire in Bohemia for a thorough religious reformation; but this was opposed by the utmost energy of the Papal power. These antagonistic elements, after numerous minor collisions, produced "the Thirty Years' War." (1618–1648.) But this long and bloody contest, although it laid the basis for an enlightened international policy in Europe, did not insure liberty of conscience to Bohemia and Moravia. And hence, as those who cherished Protestant feelings were able to secure the means, they quietly left their native country, and sought refuge in those states where Protestantism was firmly established. This state of things continued through the latter half

of the seventeenth, and the early part of the eighteenth, century.

Count Zinzendorf promotes a Moravian establishment on his estate in Saxony.

In the last-mentioned period there was a young Saxon nobleman of genuine piety and great public spirit, who largely contributed towards providing an asylum for these exiles, and fostering their piety in new settlements. This was Niklaas Ludwig, Count of Zinzendorf. In his youth he had formed a determination to devote his life to the Christian ministry; but his relations overruling this design, he purchased the lordship of Bertholdsdorf in Lusatia, intending there to spend his life in retirement.

Application was made to this nobleman on behalf of one of these emigrants, to obtain leave for some of his friends to settle on this property. The count freely consented, and a place called *Hutberg* (Watch Hill) was appropriated for the purpose. A few families came accordingly, and erected dwellings. When the first house was finished and prepared for occupancy, a religious service was performed. A sermon was preached on Isaiah lxii. 6, 7: "I have set watchmen upon thy walls, O Jerusalem, which shall never hold their peace day nor night: ye that make mention of the Lord," &c. From the application of these words, and the former name of the place, (Watch Hill,) the new settlement was called *Herrnhut*, "the Watch of the Lord." The count had exerted himself most successfully in the organization of this infant community, especially by the adoption of measures to prevent the rise of different and conflicting religious opinions. The numbers who thronged to this seat of piety and peace rapidly increased, so that they soon numbered between five and six hundred Brethren. But such success drew public attention to the settlement. A Jesuit first attacked them, and he was followed by Lutheran divines. This is not the place to detail, or defend, all the

views and practices which were inculcated or permitted in this settlement, nor to assent to or repel the charges which were brought against it. It will be sufficient to say, that the Saxon government was so far from being satisfied with the conduct of the count, that it ordered him to sell his estates, and leave the country. He had anticipated the first necessity by securing his estates to his wife; and in obeying the second, he determined to carry into effect the purpose formed in his youthful years, and devote himself fully to the ministry of the word. Assuming, therefore, the name of De Freydek, one of his titles, he went as private tutor into a merchant's family at Stralsund, became a candidate for ordination, passed the usual examination, preached with approbation in that city, and was in due time ordained a minister, and afterward consecrated a bishop, through the instrumentality of Jablonski of Berlin.

Wesley visits Herrnhut. Is instructed by the Christian knowledge of the people.

It was during the time of the count's exile from Saxony that John Wesley visited Germany. This accounts for his meeting him at Marienborn, and not at Herrnhut. Wesley's account of this settlement is as follows:—"Tuesday, August 1st, (1738.)—I came to Herrnhut, about thirty English miles from Dresden. It lies in Upper Lusatia, on the border of Bohemia, and contains about a hundred houses, built on a rising ground, with evergreen woods on two sides, gardens and cornfields on the others, and high hills at a small distance. It has one long street, through which the great road from Zittau to Lobau goes. Fronting the middle of this street is the orphan-house, in the lower part of which is the apothecary's shop; in the upper, the chapel, capable of containing six or seven hundred people. Another row of houses runs at a small distance from either end of the orphan-house, which accordingly divides the rest of the town (beside the long street) into two squares. At the east

end of it is the count's house, a small plain building like the rest, having a large garden behind it, well laid out, not for show, but for the use of the community." *

Here Wesley staid about a fortnight, attending the religious services of this pious community; conversing with their more experienced members, and carefully scrutinizing their organization, discipline, and general economy. This opportunity afforded him not only a most interesting privilege, but a very important advantage, especially at that period of his life, and at that crisis in his ministerial career. He had been very recently converted to God, and in London he had met with some who rejoiced in the same salvation; but they were very few, and generally persons who were not adapted, either by education or experience, to solve the doubts or inform the mind of a young convert. For it must not be forgotten that neither Wesley's powers of mind, nor his great learning, could prevent him from feeling as "a babe" in Christ. Here, however, he could converse with persons of matured Christian experience, who had made it their business and study to speak of divine things for the edification of their younger brethren. He availed himself of this privilege very largely, and wrote down the substance of what he was told of the religious experience of several of the most distinguished of these disciples of Christ. He was enabled by these means to observe the operation of grace on different classes of mind, and on various temperaments, and thus to acquire much religious knowledge. The careful and copious entries in his Journal afford ample proof of the importance which he attached to such acquisitions.

Here, also, Mr. Wesley saw what he had never previously seen,—large numbers of persons, many of whom were walking in the divine favour, living together in society, in

* Wesley's "Journal," under the date.

imitation of the manner of the early disciples of Christ. Herrnhut was a large village, or small town; but it also, in several respects, resembled a great Christian family. Many persons will think that this element was by far too prominent, and that many of their arrangements were unwise, if not improper. Southey mentions, in a tone of complaint, that Wesley records a simple account of some of their questionable customs and usages, "without any comment, or further explanation." Surely, when all the circumstances of the case are fairly considered, it cannot be expected that he would write a critique on their manners, or send forth to the world an elaborate judgment on their institutions. He went there not as a critic to judge, nor as a censor to rebuke, but as a pupil to learn, as an inexperienced Christian to be instructed; and he secured his object. It is but just to him to observe, that nothing he has said renders him responsible for the propriety of the usages of the Moravians. It is, on the other hand, only fair to that religious community to allow that, in Wesley's judgment, the amount of piety and Christian privilege which he witnessed at Herrnhut greatly preponderated over everything to which he might have taken exception; for, before leaving it, he said, "I would gladly have spent my life here; but my Master calling me to labour in another part of His vineyard, I was constrained to take my leave of this happy place." *

Returns to England.

Wesley returned by the same route, through Dresden and Jena to Marienborn. At Jena he had an interview with Professor Francke, and at the latter place he took leave of the Countess of Zinzendorf, the Count being from home. He thence passed through Frankfort and Cologne to Rotterdam, where he took ship, and reached London on

* "Journal," August 12th, 1738.

Saturday, September 16th, 1738. He immediately began to preach Christ as he had never done before, and to hold intimate Christian union with the Moravian teachers and converts in England. This course of evangelical action will be detailed in the next chapter.

BOOK II.

WESLEYAN METHODISM FROM THE CONVERSION OF JOHN WESLEY TO HIS DEATH.

CHAPTER I.

THE ORIGIN OF METHODISM, AND ITS PROGRESS TO THE FIRST CONFERENCE.

John Wesley's preaching on his return to England.

IMMEDIATELY on his return to England from the Continent, Wesley recommenced his labours with renewed vigour and zeal. He arrived in London on Saturday night, and began his work on the following morning. These are the entries in his Journal: "Sunday, 17th, (September, 1738,) I began again to declare in my own country the glad tidings of salvation, preaching three times, and afterwards expounding the holy Scriptures to a large company in the Minories. On Monday I rejoiced to meet our little Society, which now consisted of thirty-two persons. The next day I went to the condemned felons in Newgate, and offered them a free salvation. In the evening I went to a Society in Bear Yard, and preached repentance and remission of sins. The next evening I spoke the truth in love at a Society in Aldersgate Street: some contradicted at first, but not long; so that nothing but love appeared at our parting. Thursday, 21st, I went to a Society in Gutter Lane, but I could not declare the mighty works of God there; as I did afterwards at the Savoy with all simplicity. And the word did not return empty. Finding abundance of people

greatly exasperated by gross misrepresentations of the words I had spoken, I went to as many of them in private as my time would permit. God gave me much love towards them all. Some were convinced they had been mistaken. And who knoweth but God will soon return to the rest, and leave a blessing behind Him? On Saturday, 23rd, I was enabled to speak strong words both at Newgate and at Mr. E.'s Society; and the next day at St. Anne's, and twice at St. John's, Clerkenwell; so that I fear they will bear with me there no longer."

The origin and character of the religious Societies then existing.

The reader, while perusing this extract, will be struck with a reference to several religious Societies which were then in existence. Here he not only mentions the little Society with which he and his brother were connected, and which at this time consisted of thirty-two persons, but also refers to a Society in Bear Yard, to which he preached; to a Society in Aldersgate Street, the same, in all probability, in which he found the blessing of forgiveness; to a Society in Gutter Lane, and to Mr. E.'s Society. What were these Societies? Whence did they arise, and what was their object? The question is interesting; and a satisfactory answer to it would throw important light on the religious privileges and prospects of the period, and on the means and influences which led Wesley into the course which he afterwards pursued. It appears from an account published in London by Dr. Woodward, about the year 1699, that these Societies had their origin principally in the successful ministrations of Dr. Horneck, a pious clergyman in London, and Mr. Smithies, Lord's-day morning lecturer at Cornhill. Their discourses produced a considerable religious awakening in the metropolis, which afterward extended to other parts of the country. This religious influence was most marked and signal in its results,

particularly among young people; who, feeling the burden of their sins, and seeking counsel as to the best means of securing the blessings of salvation, were advised by their ministers to meet together weekly for pious conversation; and rules were drawn up "for the better regulation of these meetings." These religious associations arose about the year 1667; and when Dr. Woodward wrote his account, there were about forty of them in the metropolis and its vicinity, a few in the country, and nine in Ireland.* By the rules of these weekly meetings, they were required to discourse only on such subjects as tended to "practical holiness, and to avoid controversy." But, in the genuine spirit of true religion, these serious persons could not long be content to confine their attention and their inquiries to their own personal wants. They, therefore, made contributions, when they met, for the relief of the poor, and adopted measures for catechizing the young and ignorant of their families. For a while these Societies prospered greatly. Out of their religious influence and the zeal thus awakened, no less than twenty associations for the prosecution and suppression of vice seem to have arisen; all of which were favoured by several bishops, and countenanced by Queen Mary: but after the lapse of some years they declined, so that when Wesley commenced his evangelizing labours, although several still existed in London, Bristol, and some other places, they were by no means in a state of vigour or activity. To some of them Wesley refers in the above extract from his "Journal."

About three months after that period, Mr. Whitefield arrived in England from America. On hearing of his

* See Dr. Woodward's "Account of the Rise and Progress of the Religious Societies in the City of London," &c. London. 1701.

Whitefield's return to England, The obvious tendency of Wesley's course.

return, his friend "hastened to London," and they again "took sweet counsel together," and encouraged each other to prosecute a course of zealous devotedness to the service of their common Master. These ministers had now reached the turning-point of their religious career. No intelligent mind can consider their previous character and conduct, their deep religious concern for the salvation of souls, the power with which they preached the Gospel, the divine unction which attended their word, and the limited means of the small Societies to which they frequently ministered, without perceiving that they would be led by the force of circumstances into some strange ecclesiastical irregularities; or that, to avoid these, they must be constrained to abandon their wide course of evangelical usefulness, and to direct their efforts into some other channel. Yet, although the contrary has been frequently asserted, no fact in history is more certain, than that these godly men did not perceive this difficulty: and no circumstance of a past age is better attested, than that neither of the two Wesleys had any idea of doing anything contrary to the most strict ecclesiastical regularity, or conceived any purpose of forming by itinerant preaching a religious community separate from the Church of England.

About this time they had several interviews with distinguished prelates of the Church; and in one of these a conversation with the Bishop of London, on Christian doctrine and Church order. The bishop objected to their preaching the doctrine of assurance. He appears to have fallen into the very prevalent error, that by assurance they meant a divine persuasion of final salvation. When, however, they explained their meaning, he said, "If by assurance you mean an inward persuasion, whereby a man is conscious in himself, after examining his life by the law of

God, and weighing his own sincerity, that he is in a state of salvation and acceptable to God, I do not see how any good Christian can be without such an assurance." They replied, "We do contend for this." But, lest he should be misled as to the most prominent subject of their preaching, they added, "We have been charged with Antinomianism, because we preach *justification by faith alone*. Can any one preach otherwise, who agrees with our Church and the Scriptures?" The bishop did not reply to this question, but immediately called their attention to a breach of ecclesiastical order which had been alleged against them; not, be it observed, in the way of laxity or innovation, but on the score of exclusiveness and High Church zeal. "But," said the bishop, "there is a very heavy charge brought against us bishops, in consequence of your having re-baptized an adult, and alleged the archbishop's authority for doing it." John Wesley answered, that he had expressly declared the contrary, and acquitted the archbishop from having any hand in the matter; but, he added, "If a person dissatisfied with lay baptism should desire episcopal, I should think it my duty to administer it, after having acquainted the bishop according to the canon." From this view the bishop dissented, in case a person had been baptized by a Dissenter; thereby evincing a far greater degree of liberality in respect of ecclesiastical propriety, and, indeed, a better acquaintance with the doctrine and discipline of the Church, than the Wesleys.

The High Church views of Wesley and his brother.

After having elicited from the learned prelate that, in his opinion, the religious Societies to which they preached were not conventicles, and receiving an assurance that they might at all times have free access to his presence, the brothers took their leave. On the 14th of November

following, Charles Wesley waited on the same bishop to inform him "that a woman, not satisfied with having been baptized by a Dissenter, wished him to re-baptize her, and that he intended to comply with her request." "The bishop," says Mr. Charles Wesley, "immediately took fire, and interrupted me, saying, 'I wholly disapprove of it; it is irregular.'" The bishop continued in a manner which reflects great honour on his candour and liberality, and censured the High Church zeal of the young presbyter, asking him, "O why will you push me to an extreme?" On the 21st of February, 1739, John and Charles Wesley waited on Dr. Potter, Archbishop of Canterbury, to offer explanations of several reports which they knew had reached him concerning their conduct. The archbishop received them very kindly, and gave them good advice, urging them "to keep to the doctrines of the Church, to avoid all exceptionable phrases, and to preach and enforce only the essentials of religion: other things," said he, "time and the providence of God only can cure."

Charles Wesley curate of Islington.

Before this time, (on the 5th of January, 1739,) Charles Wesley says, "My brother, Mr. Seaward, Hall, Whitefield, Ingham, Kinchin, and Hutchins, all set upon me to settle at Oxford; but I could not agree to do so without farther direction from God." Yet, although he objected to this proposal, when he was invited by Mr. Stonehouse, the converted vicar of Islington, to be his curate, he immediately consented, and entered upon that course of duty.

These facts fully prove that, so far from being in danger of dissenting from the Church, the zeal of the Wesleys for ecclesiastical order far outran the views and judgment of the prelates who at that time presided over its interests; and that no intention whatever existed in their minds of

separating from its communion, or of acting in any way in opposition to its regulations; notwithstanding the contrary has been so often and so pertinaciously asserted.

Whilst John Wesley was in Germany, seeking a deeper and more intimate acquaintance with divine things, Charles proceeded, as fully as his bodily weakness and the frequent return of pleurisy would permit, to call sinners to repentance. And his labours were crowned with glorious success. Day after day sinners of every class, the profane, the outwardly moral, the Pharisaic, the careless, were brought to a godly concern, and "translated from the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of God's dear Son." This is not the place to discuss the theological principles involved in such a course of action. Nor do the various views which may be formed respecting them affect the present consideration of the subject. No candid inquirer can carefully consider the statements made in the Journals of John and Charles Wesley, without being convinced that they fully believed they had obtained the forgiveness of their sins, and the renewal of their hearts in righteousness, by simple faith in Christ. It is equally certain that they also believed that they were called of God to devote their lives to make known this salvation to their fellow men, and to bring them to experience the fruits of a like "precious faith." Nor can it be doubted that they felt the utmost assurance that their labours were crowned with success. Day after day, whilst Wesley was in Germany, did his brother see the power of God displayed in the salvation of men and women, of various character, and from every rank in life. As early as the 26th of June, less than three weeks after his brother had left England, Charles testified, in reply to an objection of a Clergyman's wife to the doctrine of "an instantaneous faith," "We

cannot but speak the things we have seen and heard. I received it in that manner, as *have above thirty others in my presence.*" And only the following day he recorded in his Journal, "Next day I returned to town, rejoicing that God had added to His living Church SEVEN more souls through my ministry." Nor was the Spirit stayed: on the one hand, eight felons whom he visited in Newgate gave reasonable hope of their conversion, and died in peace; and on the other, the vicar of Islington and the curate of St. Helen's exulted in redeeming grace. On the return of Wesley, he immediately followed in the same line of conduct as his brother, preaching in churches whenever he had opportunity, and holding meetings for Christian edification and prayer, as occasions offered. And his efforts were equally successful; so that the little Society which had begun in Fetter Lane was greatly increased, as were many others in different parts of the country.

The question therefore occurs, How were these godly and successful labours to be maintained, and the fruits of this ministry to be preserved? The heads of the Church, who had hitherto treated the brothers with kindness, might possibly have opened up to them spheres of usefulness, and have given such encouragement to their evangelical efforts, as would have kept the exercise of all their energies strictly within the pale of the Establishment. This was not done. On the contrary, the kind countenance which some of the bishops had extended toward them was withdrawn; the churches were gradually shut against them. The notices of exclusion found in Wesley's Journal are significant. "Sunday, Feb. 4th, 1739.—I preached at St. Giles's. How was the power of God present with us! I am content to preach here no more." "Sunday, March 18th.—I was desired to preach at Sir George Wheeler's

Wesley excluded from the churches.

chapel, in Spitalfields, morning and afternoon. I did so in the morning, but was not suffered to conclude my subject (as I had designed) in the afternoon. Sunday, 25th. —I preached in the morning to a numerous congregation at St. Katherine's, near the Tower; at Islington in the afternoon. Many here were as usual deeply offended. But the counsel of the Lord it shall stand." Indeed, at this time Wesley seldom occupied the pulpit of a church without being told, at the conclusion of the service, that he must preach there no more.

It may be supposed that this opposition was called forth by the irregularity of his proceedings. The case of his brother Charles, and the treatment he received, is, however, a decisive proof that it was the doctrine preached, and not the conduct of the minister, which was the real object of hostility. Charles Wesley, as already noticed, had accepted the curacy of Islington, but had entered on the duties of that office only by private arrangement with the vicar, as the bishop never gave his sanction to the appointment. The churchwardens were soon offended with his ministrations, and were determined to get rid of him. At first they confined their opposition to insult, and met him in the vestry before the commencement of service, and requested a sight of the bishop's licence, which they knew he did not possess. He meekly endured this conduct. They then proceeded to the most abusive language, and told him that "he was full of the devil." Still the pious minister proceeded on his way, "bearing ill, and doing well." These violent officials, however, were determined to expel the object of their dislike from the church; they accordingly employed men to take possession of the pulpit stairs, and to push him back when he attempted to ascend. Afterward, notwithstanding the appeals of gentlemen of the highest

Charles Wesley driven from Islington.

respectability, they themselves did this, in the face of the whole congregation. This violence being continued, the vicar, who was a good man, but lacked firmness, gave way to the storm, and the case was laid before the Bishop of London, who justified the churchwardens in the course they had taken. Charles Wesley had in consequence to retire from his curacy, and seek some other field of labour.

Whitefield in Bristol. Expelled from the churches, he preaches in the fields.

While the two Wesleys were in these circumstances, Mr. Whitefield was in Bristol preaching with very great success. He had gone to that city to make congregational collections, in support of a project which had been formed for the erection of an orphan-house in Georgia. But he was soon excluded from the pulpit of every church in Bristol, and even from the common gaol, where he had been accustomed to speak to the prisoners gratuitously. But preaching the new birth, even to thieves, was not to be endured by the civil and ecclesiastical authorities of that Christian city. Mr. Whitefield, however, having much less strength of attachment to Church order than the Wesleys, and possessing an indomitable spirit, which was not likely to bend to such obstructions as were thus placed in his way, protested against the intolerance of men, by copying the example of man's Redeemer; and went forth into the fields and in the neighbourhood of the lowest and most destitute localities, calling sinners to repentance. His success was far beyond his most sanguine hopes; so that he was induced to extend his evangelizing efforts to Bath, and to the proverbially wicked and ignorant colliers of Kingswood. The fruit of these labours was the spiritual awakening and edification of great numbers of people. But Whitefield was intent on returning to America; and yet could not bear the thought

of leaving those souls to whom his ministry had been blessed, "as sheep without a shepherd." He therefore wrote to John Wesley, entreating him to come to Bristol. Wesley saw the pressing nature of the call, but did not feel very much disposed to comply with it. The subject was, however, submitted by him to the religious Society at Fetter Lane, when Mr. Charles Wesley was greatly opposed to it; and the more it was considered, the more painfully were their minds affected. But John Wesley offered himself fully to the divine will, and it was at length arranged that he should go; yet the feeling with which this step was taken is clearly indicated in the entry made at the time by Charles Wesley in his Journal. "March 28th.—We strove to dissuade my brother from going to Bristol, to which he was pressingly invited, from an unaccountable fear that it would prove fatal to him. He offered himself willingly to whatever the Lord should appoint. The next day he set out, recommended by us to the grace of God. He left a blessing behind. I desired to die with him."

John Wesley left London on Thursday, March 29th; and on the evening of that day preached "to a small company at Basingstoke." On the following Saturday he reached Bristol, and met Mr. Whitefield. Referring to this interview, Wesley observes, "I could scarcely reconcile myself at first to this strange way of preaching in the fields, of which he set me an example on Sunday; having been all my life (till very lately) so tenacious of every point relating to decency and order, that I should have thought the saving of souls almost a sin, if it had not been done in a church." Mr. Whitefield appears to have left Bristol some time on Sunday, after having preached in the fields in the morning; for Wesley says, "In the evening

(Mr. Whitefield being gone) I began expounding our Lord's Sermon on the Mount, (one pretty remarkable precedent of field preaching, though I suppose there were churches at that time also,) to a little Society which was accustomed to meet once or twice a week in Nicholas Street."

Wesley begins to preach in the fields. Charles follows his example.

On the following day (Monday, April 2nd) Wesley committed himself to a new course of action, and passed the Rubicon of his future career, by preaching, on a little eminence near the city, to about three thousand persons, from Luke iv. 18, 19. From this beginning he prosecuted a course of labour in Bristol, Bath, Kingswood, and other places in the neighbourhood, which was greatly owned of God. Multitudes devoutly attended the preaching of the Gospel, numbers were awakened to a sense of their danger through sin, and many, being truly converted, rejoiced in the pardoning mercy of God their Saviour. After a while the following outline was laid down by Wesley as his plan of proceeding in this extraordinary work: "Every morning I read prayers and preached at Newgate. Every evening I expounded a portion of Scripture to one or more of the Societies. On Monday, in the afternoon, I preached abroad near Bristol; on Tuesday, at Bath and Two Mile Hill alternately; on Wednesday, at Baptist Mills; every other Thursday, near Pensford; every other Friday, in another part of Kingswood; on Saturday in the afternoon, and Sunday morning, on the bowling-green; (which lies near the middle of the city;) on Sunday at eleven, near Hanham Mount; at two, at Clifton; and at five, at Rose Green. And hitherto, as my days, so my strength hath been."

During the continued stay of his brother at Bristol, Charles was neither idle, nor inattentive to the manner of his proceeding, and to the great work which was being accomplished by his instrumentality. At Broad Oaks and

Thaxted in Essex, and some other places, Charles preached, both in churches and in the open air, with great success.

In consequence of these proceedings, the heads of the Church seem to have entertained serious thoughts of proceeding to extreme measures against Whitefield and the Wesleys. On Thursday, the 19th of June, Charles Wesley, with the vicar of Bexley, appeared at Lambeth, on the summons of the Archbishop of Canterbury, to answer a complaint which had been made by some third party (probably some of the parishioners) as to Mr. Charles Wesley's frequent preaching in that parish. On this occasion the archbishop significantly observed to him, that he should "not proceed to excommunication YET." Although this threat did not, at the time, greatly disconcert or distress the pious young minister to whom it was addressed, he afterwards felt it severely; but having convinced himself that this uneasiness arose from the fear of man, he took Mr. Whitefield's advice, and, on the following Sunday, boldly went forth into Moorfields, and preached the Gospel of Christ to near ten thousand hearers.

His embarrassing position and prompt decision.

It required a mind of more than ordinary vigour, even with the aid of divine grace, to sustain the peculiar and conflicting feelings which Charles Wesley's engagements at this time must have excited. On Thursday he was at Lambeth Palace, and was there threatened with excommunication; on Sunday he preached in the morning to ten thousand persons in Moorfields; in the forenoon he attended divine service and received the sacrament at St. Paul's cathedral; in the afternoon he preached at Newington Butts, and went directly from the pulpit to Kennington Common, where he addressed multitudes upon multitudes in the name of the Lord; and in the evening he attended a Moravian love-feast in Fetter Lane, where

he felt as though in one of the primitive churches. On the following Sunday he preached with great boldness, in his turn, at St. Mary's, before the University of Oxford, choosing for his subject the leading doctrine of all Protestant Churches, justification by faith.* The amount of opposition which these godly efforts called forth, may be estimated by the fact, that on the Sabbath before mentioned, as he was walking to his afternoon appointment, he crossed an open field on his way to Kennington, and, whilst doing so, was seen by the owner of the field, a Mr. Goter, who threatened to prosecute him for a trespass. This threat was carried into effect, and a few days afterwards he was served with a writ on this account, and had to pay ten pounds for the trespass, and nine pounds sixteen shillings and eight-pence for taxed costs in the suit. The injured minister endorsed the receipt with the significant words, "*To be re-judged* IN THAT DAY;" words which will as certainly be verified as was the threat of the petty tyrant.

The success of Wesley's ministry at Bristol led to another very important step toward the formation of a separate denomination; although in this case, as in others, he is clearly proved to have entertained no design beyond the supply of an immediate and very pressing necessity. The conversion and addition of so large a number of persons to the religious Societies which met in Nicholas Street and Baldwin Street, created a desire for a larger place in which they might assemble together for worship. This want being admitted, another step was taken. It was found requisite that there should be room for the friends of the members, and others who desired to be with them when the Scriptures were expounded. The necessity led to

* JACKSON'S "Life of Charles Wesley."

the erection of a chapel. For this purpose a piece of ground was procured near St. James's churchyard in the Horse Fair at Bristol, and the first stone was laid on Saturday, May 12th, 1739. Respecting this erection Wesley says, "I had not at first the least apprehension or design of being personally engaged either in the expense of the building, or in the direction of it." But in this, as in other instances, it became necessary for him not only to act as the directing genius of the work, but, what was more embarrassing to him, to be personally responsible for the whole cost. And this led, as a necessary consequence, to the property being vested in him, as, under any other arrangement, he might be expelled from the house by the legal proprietors, although he had paid, or was under engagement to pay, for almost the entire building.

First chapel built. Wesley's reasons for his course of action.

From the first of April to the beginning of June, Wesley continued his labours in Bristol and its neighbourhood with unabated success, yet not without serious questioning in his own mind. The unusual nature of his proceedings occasionally excited painful doubt and deep concern. But he says, "After frequently laying it before the Lord, and calmly weighing whatever objections I heard against it, I could not but adhere to what I had some time since wrote to a friend." In this letter he disclaims all idea of reconciling his present course with his previous character, as, prior to his return from Georgia, he was not fully "a Christian." He then deals with the advice given to him, to settle at college, accept a cure of souls, and that in the mean time he should sit still, and not invade the office of another. As to the first, he says, I have "no business" at college, "having now no office and no pupils." To the second he replies, "It will be time enough to consider" the propriety of accepting a cure "when one is offered

me." But as to his remaining still, which involved the gist of his friend's advice, he first disclaims all rule and authority but Holy Scripture, and asserts that he has received from God a dispensation of the Gospel, and feels bound to obey God rather than man. "Suffer me," he adds, "now to tell you my principles in this matter. *I look upon all the world as my parish;* thus far, I mean, that, in whatever part of it I am, I judge it meet, right, and my bounden duty, to declare, unto all that are willing to hear, the glad tidings of salvation. This is the work which I know God has called me to, and sure I am that His blessing attends it." He then alludes to the allegation that he is not likely to be useful whilst he is so maligned. To this he replies, "The more evil men say of me for my Lord's sake, the more good will He do by me: that it is for His sake, I know, and He knoweth. Blessed be God, I enjoy the reproach of Christ."

The Society in Fetter Lane having got into some disorder, Wesley went to London, June 13th, and succeeded in restoring peace and harmony. He was at this time induced by Mr. Whitefield to preach to an immense number of persons on Blackheath. Having spent about a week in London, he returned to Bristol, where his labours and success were renewed. He now extended his visits to the neighbouring towns with similar results. In these labours he was frequently assailed with the greatest abuse and violence, and called a Jesuit, a Papist, &c. On one occasion, at Bath, Beau Nash came to disturb his preaching; and, on others, riotous mobs foully abused his hearers, and threatened him. Nor was this outward opposition the greatest evil with which he was called to contend. The labours of the summer of 1739 had resulted in a wonderful work of grace throughout many parts of England, and even

Wales. During the greater part of this time it required no ordinary portion of Wesley's care, attention, and activity, to preserve those persons who were brought under religious impressions through his ministry from falling into serious error both in doctrine and practice. These efforts were rendered more arduous by various agencies with which his people were brought into contact; and among these a class of enthusiasts called "French Prophets," who pretended, with the most strange gesticulations and bodily contortions, to deliver oracularly the will and word of the Lord. Wesley used much caution and judgment in dealing with these elements, and had to do this under great disadvantage. His heart being set, not on the organization of a sect, but the conversion of souls, he had not altered the constitution of the Society at Fetter Lane, which was formed on the advice of Peter Böhler before either of the Wesleys was converted, and which gave every individual member equal right, power, and privilege.

He separates from the Moravians.

But at length a crisis arrived, which led to a division of that Society. Many of the members who were connected with the Moravians, adopted the use of mystical terms and phrases, and employed language which seemed to favour Antinomianism. Many others denied, under the denomination of "the priesthood," the Christian ministry; and, indeed, declaimed against all religious ordinances. In brief, such important differences of opinion existed between these two sections of the Fetter Lane Society as rendered a separation essential to the peace of both.

The "German stillness" of the Moravian community, their near approach to the monastic mode of life, and some of their favourite ceremonies, especially those connected with the observances of Passion Week, indicated a leaning towards much of what they deemed to be harmless in the

French Mystics. Wesley's remonstrances with them, and his attempts to "show them a more excellent way," were judicious and manly. Though they did not produce great effects on that generation, they induced a spirit of caution; and a race of men afterwards arose, who entertained sounder views, and were more meek in spirit. They soon perceived the necessity of publishing explanations, apologies, and emendations, in order to render their system more scriptural. Yet the early Hymns which embodied some of the most objectionable portions of their doctrinal errors, retained their place for many years after the first purgation.* It is a pleasure, however, to quote the charitable and just sentiments of Wesley himself on these matters, fifty years after his separation from the Moravians. They occur in his Sermon on "Knowing Christ after the *Flesh:*"—"Can we affirm that the Hymns published by a late great man (whose memory I love and esteem) are free from this fault? Are they not full of expressions which strongly savour of 'knowing Christ after the flesh?' yea, and in a more gross manner than anything which was ever before published in the English tongue? What pity is it, that those coarse expressions should appear in many truly spiritual hymns! How often, in the midst of excellent verses, are lines inserted which disgrace those that precede and follow! Why should not all the compositions in that book be not only as poetical, but likewise as rational and as scriptural, as many of them are acknowledged to be?" He then in very affectionate language relates the way in which, "by the gracious providence of God," he and his

* Those who wish to see a candid account of these errors may find it in "A short View of the Difference between the Moravian Brethren lately in England, and the Rev. Mr. John and Charles Wesley. London. 1745," p. 24.

brother "became acquainted with the (so-called) Moravian Brethren" on their voyage to America in 1736. "Every day we conversed with them, and consulted them on all occasions. I translated many of their hymns, for the use of our own congregations. Indeed, as I durst not implicitly follow any man, I did not take all that lay before me, but selected those which I judged to be most scriptural, and most suitable to sound experience. Yet I am not sure, that I have taken sufficient care to pare off every improper word or expression,—every one that may seem to border on a familiarity which does not so well suit the mouth of a worm of the earth, when addressing himself to the God of heaven. I have indeed particularly endeavoured, in all the hymns which are addressed to our blessed Lord, to avoid every *fondling* expression, and to speak as to the most high God; to Him that is 'in glory equal with the Father, in majesty co-eternal.'"

Makes the Foundery his London chapel.

Happily, some time before this, Wesley had obtained possession of the Foundery in Moorfields. This building was originally erected by the government for casting cannon, but was abandoned in consequence of a very serious accident having occurred there. Whilst it lay in a dilapidated state, Wesley was urged by two gentlemen, at that time strangers to him, to go there and preach: he complied with the request. These persons then pressed him to purchase the place, and repair it, offering to head a subscription list for the purpose. This also was done, and the premises were permanently occupied for religious services long before the division now spoken of became imminent. The Foundery was opened for preaching, November 11th, 1739.*

In consequence of the circumstances already stated,

* Myles's "Chronological History," p. 12.

Wesley attended a love-feast of the Society at Fetter Lane, on Sunday, July 20th, 1740; and at the conclusion of it read a paper containing a detail of the errors which he alleged to have been introduced among them in the preceding nine months, declaring that he regarded these as flatly contrary to the word of God. He then said that he had warned them of the evil, but, finding that they clung to these errors more and more, he gave them up to God, and invited those who thought with him to follow him. He then left, with eighteen or nineteen of the members; besides which, about forty-eight of the women attached to the bands afterwards joined him. This seems, in strict propriety, to be the real commencement of the Methodist Societies. Wesley, indeed, speaks of four other periods as epochs, each of which may be regarded as the beginning of a new development of Methodist action. The first of these was the rise of student Methodism in Oxford, while each of the others dated the inauguration of a novel and improved condition. In November, 1729, four serious students began to meet together at Oxford. The second epoch was in April, 1736, when twenty or thirty persons began to meet in Mr. Wesley's house at Savannah. The third was May 1st, 1738, when, by the advice of Peter Böhler, Mr. Wesley and other serious persons began to meet in Fetter Lane.* Again, Wesley says, "In the latter end of the year 1739, eight or ten persons came to me in London, and desired that I would spend some time with them in prayer, and advise them how to flee from the wrath to come: this was the rise of the UNITED SOCIETY."† Yet, even at this last-named period, Wesley was connected with the Fetter Lane Society, which belonged to the Moravians; so that

* WESLEY'S "Church History," vol. iv., p. 175.

† Introduction to the Rules of the Society, published in 1743.

the Society formed by him did not stand out as a separate and distinct religious body. But after Sunday, July 20th, 1740, all the initiatory stages of the Society had been passed through, and there was (in its infancy, indeed, but as having a separate and distinct existence and action) a Wesleyan Methodist Society. Not that the Society was known by that name; it was not; but from that germ the Wesleyan Society has grown, and no other change has passed upon it, except from small to great, from few to many, from weak to strong, from a rudimental condition to one of completeness and maturity. The Society then formed at the Foundery has remained, by a continual accession of new members replacing those removed by death and other causes, and enlarging the aggregate number of the body, from that period to the present time. But it has continued essentially the same in its progress; and, as might be expected, has acquired suitable and effective organization. Of one important instance of this it will be necessary now to speak.

The Wesleyan Methodist Society henceforth a separate religious body.

Wesley's principal work from the time of his return from Germany had been that of an evangelist. He went from place to place, calling sinners to repentance, and leading them by faith in Christ to the experience of pardoning mercy. He, indeed, found some serious persons in the religious societies of London, Bristol, and a few other places, who already rejoiced in the Gospel salvation, but these were very few: the great body of those who gathered about him, and sought from his lips spiritual direction and advice, were his children in the faith,—men and women who by the instrumentality of his ministry had been brought from a state of ignorance and sin to the enjoyment of grace, and the practice of holiness. How were these numerous and constantly increasing bands of devout persons to be

The fruit of Wesley's preaching requires spiritual oversight and culture.

supplied with spiritual nurture and oversight? Those who have written on this subject as avowed upholders of the Established Church, from Lavington to Southey, have in effect always said, "Here the great evil of Wesley's irregularity is seen, and one mischievous element thus produces another." But those who so express themselves should be reminded, that the thing of which they speak is the grace of God, which His Holy Spirit had put into the hearts of these people. If it is not so, there is no difficulty in the case; for mere pretence, hypocrisy, or formalism, requires no more spiritual culture than lying, swearing, or drunkenness. But if the persons referred to had really received divine grace, and if this fact is deplored as a calamity, because of the irregular manner in which it is obtained, then it becomes a serious question, whether a far greater evil is not committed by making ecclesiastical order on earth more contracted than the revelation of divine mercy from heaven. An ecclesiastical order which cramps the operations of grace, and checks the progress of spiritual religion, is not worthy of being upheld and perpetuated; but should rather be regarded as "a yoke of bondage," and a "body of death."

There was, however, in this case, no oversight on the part of Wesley. He had thought of the difficulty before it arose, and believed it might be easily met. He judged that, although few of the ministers who then served in the Established Church would go forth into the highways and hedges, to seek the outcasts of society, and lead the vilest and worst of sinners to a saving acquaintance with Christ, yet surely, if he devoted his life to the labour of evangelizing sinners, they would, generally at least, receive these penitent and pardoned believers with open arms, and afford them religious instruction, Christian communion, and the ordinances of

worship. The most earnest advocates of Church order are seriously invited to consider the effect that would have been produced on the state of the Church of England, and, through it, on the nation at large, if this reasonable expectation of Wesley had been adequately met. One thing is certain: whatever may be alleged against him, it is impossible to believe that he did not desire and would not have rejoiced in such an issue. The religious condition of the clergy at this period defeated such a hope; and it is *to this cause*, and not to the ambition or irregularities of Wesley, that the existence of Methodism, when regarded as a sin against Church order, is to be attributed. No other proof of this statement is needed than the fact, that pious persons were repelled from the Lord's table, and refused the holy sacrament, at Bristol * and in other places, simply because they were hearers of Wesley. He consequently felt that the spiritual care of these penitent and believing souls was thrown on him; and this feeling occasioned the deepest and most serious deliberation in his mind. If he could have satisfied himself to select the most promising locality, and sit down there, it cannot be doubted that he might have had numerous followers, and been very useful. But this was not commensurate with his sense of duty. With a truly Pauline spirit, he longed to go through the length and breadth of the land, awakening the slumbering, and calling those who were dead in sins to a life of righteousness. In order to do this, it was necessary that he should have some aid in "shepherding" those who were already brought into the fold. To provide for this want, he appointed a pious and talented young man, Thomas Maxfield, who had been singularly raised up for his help and owned of God in the salvation of sinners, to pray, exhort,

This denied by the clergy; partially supplied by lay assistants.

* "Life of Charles Wesley," vol. i., p. 231.

and take the oversight of the Society at the Foundery during his absence; while another young man of considerable promise, John Cennick, was appointed to a similar duty at Kingswood.

The labours of Wesley, especially in the early part of his career, were frequently interspersed with seasons of severe difficulty and conflict. One of these issued in the separation of the Wesleys from their early and intimate friend, George Whitefield. It was Wesley's opinion in after life, that in his early labours his preaching had leaned too much toward Calvinism.* He had not at that time carefully studied the subject, and, without reference to that controversy, had preached the Gospel with the simple view of saving souls; although he sometimes speaks in his Journal of having been drawn out to declare that God willeth "all men to be saved."† Mr. Whitefield then appears to have felt, believed, and acted in unison with Wesley. From the nature of the subject, however, it was all but impossible that a newly formed Christian community, possessing great freedom, zeal, and energy, could long avoid discussing the doctrines of election and predestination. This subject had, indeed, been mooted by the converts in London during Wesley's absence in Germany; but Charles Wesley expressed himself so strongly against it, that no further efforts were at that time made to unsettle the minds of the people respecting the universality of God's love to mankind. But as the Dissenters generally entertained the Calvinistic doctrine of election more or less strongly, and as many who had been brought up among them had joined the Methodist Society, it is more than probable that some of Wesley's followers from the begin-

* Wesley's "Works," vol. viii., pp. 267, 324.

† *Ibid.*, vol. i., p. 178.

ning held similar opinions. Mr. Whitefield, on his second visit to America, was kindly received by many of the pious ministers in the Northern States who were decided Calvinists; and, being much edified by their piety, he was led to embrace their theological views. By their advice he began to read the writings of the Puritan divines, from which he derived much pleasure, and in whose doctrines he entirely concurred. There can be no doubt that this change in his sentiments was communicated by letters to his friends in England.

Wesley separated from Whitefield.

The first distinct intimation given by Wesley of the progress of these views in the Methodist Society, was in the case of a Mr. Acourt, (June 19th, 1740,) who complained that he was hindered from going into the Society, because, as he acknowledged, he was determined not only to believe, but constantly to maintain by argument, the doctrines of election and reprobation in the strongest terms. It was also soon apparent, that Mr. Cennick, who had been placed in charge of the school at Kingswood, was similarly affected. To check what he regarded as the progress of serious error, Wesley preached at Bristol (1740) a sermon on "Free Grace," (Rom. viii. 32,) which he immediately published. This measure undoubtedly did much toward the object intended by the preacher. But it also hastened the crisis. Mr. Whitefield, on seeing this sermon, took great offence, and wrote a private letter to Wesley on the subject. A copy of this letter found its way into the hands of some of Mr. Whitefield's friends in this country, and they got it printed and distributed amongst the hearers of Wesley; it was freely circulated, even at the door of the Foundery. (February 1st, 1741.) Having obtained a copy, Wesley explained the nature of the unauthorized publication of a private letter, and said he would do what he believed

Mr. Whitefield would do himself, if he was there; and then tore the letter in pieces before them. Those who had received copies did the same: thus this attempt at sowing discord failed.

About a fortnight before this circumstance occurred, (January 17th, 1741,) Mr. Cennick had written to Mr. Whitefield, earnestly entreating his immediate return to England, to assist in counteracting the false and mischievous tendency of the preaching of the Wesleys. Meanwhile, Cennick laboured most industriously to undermine them in the judgment and affections of their pious and simple-minded people. Of course, Mr. Cennick had as clear a right to believe and advocate the Calvinistic doctrine of election, as Wesley had to entertain and preach general redemption. The ground of complaint against him was, that whilst employed by Wesley, teaching in his school, expounding to people whom he had gathered, Cennick earnestly, but insidiously, opposed the views of his patron and friend, and perseveringly assailed his doctrines and character. This conduct issued, as might have been expected, in the entire separation of Mr. Cennick from the Wesleyan Society, and the long-continued spiritual barrenness of Kingswood. Nearly twenty years afterwards, (October 12th, 1760,) Wesley made the following entry in his Journal: "I visited the classes at Kingswood. Here only there is no increase; and yet, where was there such a prospect, till that weak man, John Cennick, confounded the poor people with strange doctrines? O what mischief may be done by one that means well! We see no end of it to this day." Alas! how often has Wesleyan Methodism had to repeat the same complaint!

Mr. Whitefield returned to England in March, 1741, and at once evinced an estrangement from his former friends.

Wesley called on him, and says of the interview, "He told me, he and I preached two different gospels; and therefore he not only would not join with, or give me the right hand of fellowship, but was resolved publicly to preach against me and my brother, wheresoever he preached at all."* This threat he carried into effect; and the strange sight was soon after seen, of Mr. Whitefield preaching in Moorfields near the Foundery, in direct opposition to the doctrines delivered by his former friends in that building. The same thing was repeated at Kingswood and other places. It may be appropriate to remark, that, although this difference of opinion alienated these pious and eminent men from each other for a while, good feeling was afterwards fully restored; and while each retained his opinions to the last, they loved and esteemed each other; so that, when Mr. Whitefield died, he left Wesley a mourning ring as a token of his love, and desired that he would preach his funeral sermon, which he did. These doctrinal discussions, however, had a very unfavourable effect on the infant cause of Methodism, which from henceforth became divided into two branches, the Calvinistic and the Wesleyan. The former of these, we need hardly say, has, in effect, been merged long ago in evangelical Dissent, distinctively so denominated.

Wesley, notwithstanding, continued to pursue his way with unfailing diligence, although harassing trials followed each other. Scarcely had he escaped from the Calvinistic controversy, and risen from the loss of Whitefield's valuable co-operation, to pursue his usual course of incessant labour, when he felt the presence of danger in a relation the most intimate and endearing. The case has, indeed, been sometimes greatly exaggerated, but it is an undoubted

* Wesley's "Journal," March 28th, 1741.

Charles Wesley inclined towards the Moravians.

fact that about this time Charles Wesley was so far brought under the influence of some of the principal Moravians, that he actually contemplated retiring from the itinerant career, and from active co-operation with his brother. In the month of January, 1741, he was engaged in delivering a course of expository discourses on the First Epistle of St. John, at five o'clock in the morning. He suddenly desisted from this service, and expressed his intention to proceed no farther with it. The following entry is found in John Wesley's Journal: "January 22nd.—I began expounding where my brother had left off, viz., at the fourth chapter of the First Epistle of St. John. He had not preached the morning before; nor intended to do it any more. 'The Philistines are upon thee, Samson.' But the Lord is not 'departed from thee.' He shall strengthen thee yet again, and thou shalt be 'avenged of them for the loss of thine eyes.'" This passage clearly gives John Wesley's view of his brother's state: he was evidently induced to act under some influence foreign to himself, yet he had not, in doing so, lost his piety; and hence the confidence expressed of his recovery. John Wesley's judgment was justified by the event. In three weeks from the date of the last extract, he writes: "February 12th.—My brother returned from Oxford, and preached on the true way of waiting upon God; thereby dispelling at once the fears of some and the vain hopes of others, who had confidently affirmed that Charles Wesley was *still* already, and would come to London no more." Yet, notwithstanding this favourable circumstance, Wesley entertained serious fears respecting his brother's stability. On the 21st of April following, he wrote a letter to Charles, in which, after enumerating five reasons why he could "in no wise join the Moravians," he says, "O my brother, my soul is grieved for

you. The poison is in you. Fair words have stolen away your heart. 'No English man or woman is like the Moravians.' So the matter is come to a fair issue. Five of us did stand together a few months since, and two are gone to the right hand, Hutchins and Cennick; and two more to the left, Mr. Hall and you. Lord, if it be Thy Gospel which I preach, arise, and maintain Thine own cause! Adieu!" * Mr. Jackson, in his "Life of Charles Wesley," has expressed a confident opinion that John Wesley was in this latter case mistaken in his fears respecting his brother: he certainly assigns some weighty reasons in support of this opinion, and no man's judgment is entitled to more respect on this subject. But the fact on which he mainly relies, namely, that at this very time Charles Wesley was engaged in writing a "Short Account of Mrs. Hannah Richardson," whose experience, as given by him in this little work, was in direct opposition to all the leading tenets of the Moravian Church, does not prove his case. It seems quite as likely that the writing of this account was, under God, the means of restoring Charles to sound views of the faith, as that it was a proof that he had previously been restored. It may not now be possible to remove all doubt from either of these opinions, by showing the precise date of Charles Wesley's recovery; but it is certain, from a letter of the Countess of Huntingdon, to which Mr. Jackson refers, that it was not until the autumn of this year (1741) that the Moravians gave up their "strenuous attempts" to secure his adhesion to their views: then, and not till then, he appears to have sent them "a letter of absolute and final refusal." And surely, whilst they had reason to hope, his brother had equal cause to fear.

* "Journal," April 21st, 1741; JACKSON'S "Life of Charles Wesley," vol. i., p. 272.

Wesley the subject of peculiar difficulties and trials.

It is scarcely possible to form any correct estimate of the constant succession of trial and opposition through which the founder of Methodism urged his way. The abandonment of his most intense High Church partialities,—the renunciation of his long cherished desire for collegiate seclusion and retirement,—the adoption of a course of life which exposed him to incessant labour, to the most harassing anxiety, and vulgar indignity,—and his steady pursuit of this course, amid the desertion of friends and the hostility of foes, must, when fairly considered, impress on every observer the conclusion that John Wesley was a most extraordinary phenomenon of human life and action, —of Christian devotedness and zeal.

Nor is it the least remarkable element in this case, that he most certainly did not know how, or by what means, he was to carry out the great work upon which he had entered. If, therefore, Wesley did not pursue his course of labour and evangelical action with the simple object of saving souls from death, and if he were not sustained by a strong conviction that in this course he was doing the will of God, and might hence assuredly count on divine direction and support, he was more infatuated than a man who would embark in a large vessel for a long voyage, without chart, compass, or crew. Wesley, in the outset of his career, had formed very agreeable connexions with many able and excellent clergymen. James Hervey was one of the earliest of his associates; but when the founder of Methodism had made himself so vile as to go into the highways to call sinners to repentance, Mr. Hervey protested against his irregularity and extravagance. Mr. Whitefield separated from him on the doctrinal question of election; while the elegant and excellent Mr. Gambold, the warm-hearted Mr. Stonehouse, and others, drank so deeply of the waters of

Moravian stillness, that they not only did not support him, but actually threw up their livings, deprived the Church of their countenance and example, and retired to rural solitude to waste their lives in inaction. In these circumstances, with his own brother wavering between the views of the Gospel which he preached, and those of the Moravians, Wesley stood alone, with the world for his parish, but without a single helper on whom he could fully depend.

Providential origin of lay preaching in connexion with Wesley.

At this critical juncture in the progress of Methodism, Providence provided a kind of assistance which enabled him to carry out into successful and permanent action the great work which had been begun. It may be regarded as the law of evangelical progress, that wherever the Gospel is so preached and blessed of God as to bring sinners to salvation, some of the converts are qualified and called by the Holy Spirit, to echo the truth through which they have been saved, to their fellow sinners. And it has always been one of the most important duties of the Church, to examine, recognise, and appoint such, and none but such, to be preachers, ministers, and pastors. Unhappily, indeed, in some places and ages, these divine gifts, and this spiritual call, have been almost, if not altogether, overlooked; and the external action of the Church in the examination of clerical candidates with regard to their proficiency in classical and mathematical learning, irrespective of personal piety and scriptural knowledge, has been too commonly regarded as the only proper means for securing the appointment of suitable men for the Christian ministry.

Wesley was not embarrassed for want of fellow labourers by the paucity of his converts, or their poverty in spiritual gifts. Seldom has the Church seen persons more richly endowed with all the qualifications essential to spiritual usefulness, than were the early members of the Methodist

Societies. He had men among his sons in the Gospel qualified for every kind of ministerial duty; but nothing except a clear providential call could induce him to depart so far from the order of the Established Church, as to give his sanction to the preaching of laymen in his Societies.

Before this time, an example of lay preaching had been set in a quarter where Wesley had no authority, but of which he had knowledge, and by a man with whom he had strong sympathy; and others in different parts of the country had followed a similar course. Howel Harris was brought to God in Wales before Wesley went to America, and, although without a counsellor or guide, was taught of God "not to eat his morsel alone." He says, "Now the fire of God did so burn in my soul, that I could not rest day nor night, without doing something for my God and Saviour.....When alone, I was taken up wholly in reading, praying, or writing, &c.; and I also continued to go on exhorting the poor people who flocked to hear me every Sunday evening."* Mr. Harris continued this course, and became one of the most laborious and useful preachers of the day. Joseph Humphries, as a lay preacher, assisted Wesley in 1738.† Mr. Cennick regularly expounded the Scriptures at Kingswood, immediately on his arrival there, June, 1739;‡ and it is equally certain that David Taylor had been in Yorkshire, like Howel Harris in Wales, exhorting and preaching, from 1738, as he had probably done long before. Nor can it be reasonably doubted that Mr. Shaw was a lay preacher, who insisted that he had as good a right to baptize and administer the sacrament as any other man, because "there is no priesthood in the

* "A Brief Account of the Life of Howel Harris. Trevecka, 1751," p. 21.

† WESLEY'S "Works," vol. iv., p. 473.

‡ "The Life of Mr. J. Cennick. Third Edition. London, 1778," pp. 20, 21.

Christian Church;"*—whilst it is certain that Mr. Bowers, a layman, preached to a congregation which had been previously addressed by Mr. Whitefield, although that minister and Charles Wesley had earnestly forbidden him.† These, and other cases which might be cited, prove that lay preaching had begun, and was probably known to exist in many localities; but for these practices Wesley was not responsible, except as respected Humphries, Cennick, and Maxfield; and they appear to have been appointed to expound and exhort, which he evidently considered altogether different from the discharge of full ministerial functions. Nor was this practice any violation of Scripture or ecclesiastical order. Wesley was well aware that in ancient and modern times some of the most exclusive Churches which ever existed have allowed laymen to preach, and that some of the most eminent and useful preachers and reformers were never ordained, and were consequently laymen.‡ The question, therefore, was not simply whether laymen should preach, but whether laymen should be separated from their worldly business, and be set apart as preachers, after the manner of Christian ministers. This question was solved not by any sacrifice of Wesley's principles to meet a pressing emergency, but by a very clear and peculiar providence in the case of Thomas Maxfield.

Those who knew Wesley most intimately, and had lived long in his unreserved confidence, gave the following account of this case: "When he was about to leave London for a season, he appointed one whom he judged to be strong in faith, and of an exemplary conversation, to meet the Society at the usual times, to pray with them, and to give them such advice as might be needful. This was Mr.

* Moore's "Life of Wesley," vol. i., p. 469. † *Ibid.*, p. 470.

‡ Wesley's "Works," vol. viii., pp. 212–218; vol. xii., pp. 81–84.

Maxfield, one of the first-fruits of his ministry at Bristol. This young man, being fervent in spirit and *mighty in the Scriptures,* greatly profited the people. They crowded to hear him; and by the increase of their number, as well as by their earnest and deep attention, they insensibly led him to go further than he had at first designed. He began to *preach,* and the Lord so blessed the word, that many were not only deeply awakened and brought to repentance, but were also made happy in a consciousness of pardon. The Scripture marks of true conversion,—inward peace, and power to walk in all holiness,—evinced the work to be of God.

"Some, however, were offended at this *irregularity,* as it was termed. A complaint was made in form to Mr. Wesley, and he hastened to London, in order to put a stop to it. His mother then lived in his house, adjoining to the Foundery. When he arrived, she perceived that his countenance was expressive of dissatisfaction, and inquired the cause. 'Thomas Maxfield,' said he, abruptly, 'has turned preacher, I find.' She looked attentively at him, and replied, 'John, you know what my sentiments have been. You cannot suspect me of favouring readily anything of this kind. But take care what you do with respect to that young man; for he is as surely called of God to preach as you are. Examine what have been the fruits of his preaching, and hear him also yourself.' He did so. His prejudice bowed before the force of truth, and he could only say, '*It is the Lord: let Him do what seemeth Him good.*'" *

No man, whatever may be his reputation, can get rid of this statement, as Dr. Southey endeavours to do, by the insinuation, "The official biographers say," &c. These

* Moore's "Life of Wesley," vol. i., p. 506.

biographers were men equally distinguished for learning and ability as ministers of religion. They had ample means of knowing the facts of the case, and no motive whatever for perverting them. The account which has been given therefore stands unimpeached. Wesley saw that God had certainly called Mr. Maxfield to preach the Gospel. He accordingly recognised the divine call, and authorized him to preach to the Methodist congregations. He had already been fully and constantly employed as a leader and exhorter, and from this time his vocation also included the ministry of the word. But the ministry of the word did not in Wesley's judgment imply the authority of administering the sacraments. Maxfield was Wesley's first "lay helper," as he calls him. Nothing is more certain in history, than that this acceptance of Maxfield as a "helper" was no premeditated step of Wesley; but that he really submitted, contrary to his own views, to a clear and distinct manifestation of the divine will. If, indeed, he erred at all in this matter, it was not in the way of innovation, but by an improper adherence to the practice of the Church of England, in refusing to allow such men, although so clearly called of God, to administer the sacraments, because they were not episcopally ordained. Yet to this practice he did adhere, although he could not defend it on scriptural grounds.*

The acceptance of Maxfield as a preacher was quickly followed by the labours of another layman in that vocation, respecting whose course of action Wesley had scarcely any option. This person was John Nelson, a stonemason, of Yorkshire. He had come from his native county to London for employment. His father was a good man, and read the Scriptures with his family. John became im-

* WESLEY'S "Works," vol. vii., p. 261, *note*.

pressed with religious feeling and conviction at a very early age: but, his father dying while he was yet young, he had no one to guide his mind or direct his steps. He grew up, and was married, without any decided change of heart. At length, feeling that he was not likely to break off from his sins and live to God in his native place, he left it; and, after a while, came to London, where he soon afterward heard Mr. Whitefield preach. Nelson was greatly delighted with his discourse, but did not receive any particular impression or instruction. He had attended the public worship of every denomination he was acquainted with, not excepting Roman Catholics or Quakers; he had even thought of visiting the Jews. At length, he heard John Wesley the first time he preached in Moorfields. That sermon determined his course of life; he sought and found mercy, and was filled with joy and peace in believing. He was not satisfied to remain longer in London, and leave his family and friends in Yorkshire ignorant of the way of salvation. He accordingly returned home, and soon began to reprove sin, and to tell his neighbours what the Lord had done for his soul; and, as they came together in great numbers, he began to preach to them, and many were turned to God. He continued this practice for some time, working at his trade during the day, and preaching in the evening. When Wesley visited the north in the early part of 1742, he stopped at Birstal, sent for John Nelson, whom he had known in London, talked with him, and preached twice in the neighbourhood. Thus, both without and with the consent of Wesley, did his sons in the Gospel call sinners to repentance, and God was pleased to set His seal to their labours by the conversion of souls.

As the work increased, some of these young men offered themselves to assist their father in the Gospel by preaching

wherever he might appoint them. The first who acted thus was Thomas Maxfield, afterwards Thomas Richards and Thomas Westall; and he says, "I durst not refuse their assistance." *

In order, however, to the permanence of the work of God, so signally begun by the labours of the Wesleys, and carried on with the assistance of lay preachers, it was absolutely necessary that some arrangement of the converts brought under the influence of the Gospel should be made; or some organization be introduced which would allow and provide for an effective and Christian oversight of the individual members. As Societies, these several religious communities were originally based on the practice of a few serious people associating together for mutual edification; but when the number of members became great, and experimental religion was more generally understood, more than this was obviously necessary. Wesley informs us that in September, 1741, the Society in London amounted to about one thousand members,†—a number which rendered individual oversight by him, or any of his coadjutors, engaged as they were in travelling and preaching throughout the country, impossible. In this case, however, as in others, Providence opened a supply in a manner unanticipated and effectual. Wesley's own account of this circumstance is equally candid, ingenuous, and satisfactory: "But as much as we endeavoured to watch over each other, we soon found some who did not live in the Gospel. I do not know that any hypocrites were crept in; for indeed there was no temptation; but several grew cold, and gave way to the sins which had long easily beset them. We quickly perceived there were many ill consequences of suf-

* "Works," vol. viii., p. 299.

† Wesley's "Church History," vol. iv., p. 178.

fering these to remain among us. It was dangerous to others, inasmuch as all sin is of an infectious nature. It brought such a scandal on their brethren as exposed them to what was not properly the reproach of Christ. It laid a stumbling-block in the way of others, and caused the truth to be evil spoken of.

"We groaned under these inconveniences long, before a remedy could be found. The people were scattered so wide in all parts of the town, from Wapping to Westminster, that I could not easily see what the behaviour of each person in his own neighbourhood was; so that several disorderly walkers did much hurt before I was apprised of it.

Similar appointment of class-meetings.

"At length, while we were thinking of quite another thing, we struck upon a method for which we have cause to bless God ever since. I was talking with several of the Society in Bristol (15th February, 1742) concerning the means of paying the debts there, when one stood up and said, 'Let every member of the Society give a penny a week, till all are paid.' Another answered, 'But many of them are poor, and cannot afford to do it.' 'Then,' said he, 'put eleven of the poorest with me; and if they can give nothing, I will give for them as well as for myself. And each of you call on eleven of your neighbours weekly; receive what they give, and make up what is wanting.' It was done. In a while some of these informed me, they found such and such an one did not live as he ought. It struck me immediately, 'This is the thing, the very thing we have wanted so long.' I called together all the leaders of the classes, (so we used to term them and their companies,) and desired that each would make a particular inquiry into the behaviour of those whom he saw weekly. They did so. Many disorderly walkers were detected.

Some turned from the evil of their ways. Some were put away from us."*

As this mode of carrying out the object took up a great deal of the leader's time, and he had but seldom a suitable place to converse with the members personally, it was soon resolved that the class had better meet in one place at a given hour for this purpose. The practice became general, and gave efficiency and good organization to the Societies. The leaders also met Wesley or his assistant every week, to report any cases of sickness or disorderly conduct, and to pay the steward of the Society the sum which had been received of the class during the week.

Methodist organization.

This arrangement, valuable and excellent in itself, led to another important usage. Wesley, giving an account of it, says, "As the Society increased, I found it required still greater care to separate the precious from the vile. In order to this I determined, at least once in three months, to talk with every member myself, and to inquire at their own mouths, as well as of their leaders and neighbours, whether they grew in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ."† To each of the persons thus spoken to, whose conduct was satisfactory, Wesley gave a ticket, on which he wrote the member's name. This ticket enabled the person to obtain anywhere the privileges of a member, and was, says Wesley, "just of the same force as the commendatory letters mentioned by the Apostle."

It has been thought necessary to explain the circumstances in which the Wesleys were placed, the views under which they acted, and the principles by which they were guided; to trace the origin of Wesleyan agency and organization to their true source; and to show the self-denial, difficulty, and opposition, which the founder of

* Wesley's "Works," vol. viii., p. 244. † *Ibid.*, p. 247.

Methodism especially had to surmount, in order to prosecute with success the work to which he felt himself called of God. In 1744, he found the work assuming such magnitude as to render it necessary for him to seek the Christian counsel of the clergy who sympathized with him, together with that of the more experienced of his lay assistants. But before this chapter is closed, and the business of that Conference is introduced, it will be necessary to give a brief narrative of the progress of Methodism, from the commencement of itinerant preaching to the middle of 1744.

Labours of Wesley and others in 1738.

The principal seats of Methodism at this early date were London and Bristol: the religious Societies (noticed in a preceding chapter) greatly tended to the furtherance of evangelical influence in those cities. But it will place the subject in the clearest point of view, to trace the progress of Wesley's labours from year to year. In 1738, after his return from Germany in September, he continued preaching in and about London to the end of the year, with the exception of brief visits to Bristol, Oxford, Gloucester, and a few other places. Charles Wesley's labours during this period were also principally confined to London, although he occasionally visited Oxford and Bexley. The fruits of these ministerial efforts, by which many were converted to God, were united with the Societies already in existence, some of which were composed mainly of Moravians. Besides what was thus accomplished by the instrumentality of the Wesleys in and about the metropolis, the Lord had, in a very peculiar manner, begun a work of grace in different parts of the country. Howel Harris was brought to a knowledge of the truth, by the teaching of the Spirit, in Wales; and before the end of this year he began not only to exhort in his own neighbourhood, but to itinerate

for the purpose of preaching through other parts of Wales. There was also one of the Societies described by Dr. Woodward at St. Ives, in Cornwall, which appears at this period to have put forth increasing proofs of spiritual vitality and power. About this time, also, God had raised up a preacher of the Gospel in Leicestershire, whose labours were the means of diffusing the light of truth in that county, Cheshire, Derbyshire, and some parts of Yorkshire. This was David Taylor. He had been butler to Lady Betty Hastings, celebrated for her piety and liberality. The first occasion of his turning his thoughts toward religious teaching, as far as can be learned, was this: on one occasion the domestic chaplain was absent, and the question was asked, "Who shall read prayers?" and it was instantly replied, "David Taylor." His character in the household seems to have marked him out as the most suitable man for this religious duty. In performing this act of worship, he became the subject of such deeply religious impressions, that they gave a direction to all his future life. He soon after left the service of Lady Hastings, and entered upon a course of itinerant preaching. It does not appear at what time he commenced these efforts, but it is certain that in 1738 he was thus engaged.

The progress of Methodism in 1739.

The year 1739 is regarded as the date of the origin of Methodism, and with good reason. Before this time there had, indeed, been much evangelical labour put forth; but the results had not been so gathered as to appear in a collective form. The events of this year did much to prepare the way for this necessary end.

John Wesley continued to give the largest share of his attention to London, Oxford, and Bristol; but he found time to preach at Reading, Pensford, Gloucester, Bradford, (Wilts.,) in South Wales, at Tiverton, Exeter, Malms-

bury, and many other places; and to some of these he went several times. Charles Wesley was curate at Islington until June in this year, when he was expelled. Afterwards his brother and he generally occupied London and Bristol alternately; but in addition to taking his share in the evangelization of these cities, and the care of the Societies in them, Charles preached at Wycombe, Evesham, and Bradford.

Besides these ministers, there were other agents at work. It is important to recognise the fact stated by Mr. Myles in order to have a correct view of Wesleyan operations at this period, namely, that "a few laymen assisted Mr. Wesley as local preachers, before itinerancy was established."* Mr. Cennick was at this time expounding and teaching at Kingswood: others expounded in London;† some of these belonged to the Fetter Lane Society, from which, as yet, Wesley had not formally separated. Mr. Bowers, of whom mention has already been made, continued to preach, as did David Taylor, who this year was the means of the conversion of John Bennett, celebrated in the early annals of Methodism. Bennett appears almost immediately to have begun to preach also, and continued to do so with great effect in Derbyshire and the adjacent counties. In Cornwall, also, the work received an impulse about this time. There is still extant a ticket of this year given to a person near Penzance, with "J. R." as the initials of the preacher.

Methodist labours and progress, 1740.

The year 1740 found Wesley and his brother pursuing a similar course of labour. But this was a season of peculiar trial and conflict. Throughout the larger portion of the year it required the utmost efforts of the brothers to

* Myles's "Chronological History," p. 293.

† Wesley's "Works," vol. i., p. 240.

guard their people against Moravian stillness and Antinomianism on the one hand, and Whitefield's doctrine of predestination on the other. Yet, notwithstanding all the time and strength which these controversial labours required, the work was not only maintained, but advanced. The separation from the Moravians at Fetter Lane was effected, and the followers of Wesley fairly united with him at the Foundery. The New Room, as the first Bristol chapel was called, was regularly occupied. Mr. Joseph Humphries continued his labours as a local preacher.* Thomas Maxfield had in the early part of the year been permitted to preach as an assistant to Wesley. John Nelson was converted, and preparing for his career of usefulness; and there can be no doubt that many other agents, whose names we have never heard, also laboured with ability and zeal. Mr. Ingham, who had been to America with Wesley, but who, ere long, joined the Moravians, had gone into Yorkshire and preached with great success, and is said to have founded sixty Societies in that county alone, while he was sound in the faith. The work progressed very satisfactorily in Wales, and throughout the country the prospects were cheering.

Continued evangelical efforts and success, 1741.

1741.—This year presents a further extension of Methodism. Leicestershire, Northampton, Markfield, Ogbrook, Nottingham, Melbourne, Abingdon, and other places not previously mentioned, were visited with more or less success, and Societies formed in several of them. John Nelson was at this time working at his trade by day, and preaching in the evening and on the Sabbath days with great success, in Yorkshire. Many were brought to God by his instrumentality. But, on the other hand, Mr. Ingham had

* Wesley's "Works," vol. i., p. 257.

imbibed the errors of the Moravians: David Taylor had joined him, and lost his spiritual power.* John Bennett, however, still continued his labours, and was extensively useful. It is impossible now to give any tolerable idea of the agents employed at this period in either direct or remote connexion with Wesley, and of the results of their labours. We learn incidentally, that Mr. Williams was a very popular preacher at Bath,† and hear of the remarkable conversion of Mr. Thorpe of Rotherham. He was at an alehouse, with some companions, when it occurred to them that they might amuse themselves by mimicking the preaching of the Methodists. His companions procured a Bible, and for a wager they exerted themselves successively to turn a text into ridicule. At length Thorpe took the book, saying, "I shall beat you all." He opened, entirely by accident on his part, on Luke xiii. 3: "Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish." He was instantly struck with strong convictions; his mind was filled with light on the awful subject. He delivered a serious, sensible, and earnest address, of which, after he became a preacher, he said, "If I ever preached in my life by the assistance of the Spirit of God, it was at that time." The effect on his companions was little less remarkable than on his own mind: there was no merriment, no ridicule; a solemn gloom sat on every countenance; and the speaker afterwards observed, that some of his sentences "seemed to make his own hair stand erect." Having finished his discourse, not a word was said respecting the wager. Mr. Thorpe immediately withdrew. His companionship with revilers ceased; he at once sought the society of the people whom he had ridiculed, and soon became an

* Nelson's "Journal," p. 43, Edition of 1850.

† "Methodist Magazine," 1794, p. 476.

able and earnest preacher of the Gospel.* He died in 1776.

1742 was a most important period to the infant cause of Methodism. Wesley had not only formed numerous Societies, but saw the fruit of his labours rising up around him as able assistants. The following preachers were during this year engaged as helpers, besides many local preachers in connexion with the several Societies: William Biggs, Alexander Coates, William Crouch, William Darney, John Hall, John Houghton, Thomas Hardwick, Samuel Larwood, Thomas Maxfield, Charles Manning, (vicar of Hayes, near Uxbridge,) John Maddern, Henry Millard, Thomas Meyrick, John Nelson, William Prior, Jonathan Reeves, Robert Swindells, David Taylor, Thomas Westall, Thomas Williams, James Wheatley, Enoch Williams,—in all twenty-three. Methodist progress, 1742.

With this assistance, Wesley was able to maintain regular religious worship in connexion with his various Societies, and at the same time to extend the work into new districts. Having spent January in London, and February in Bristol, he set out for Wales, laboured there about three weeks, and then returned to London, where he continued until the middle of May, when he set out by way of Newport Pagnell and Donnington Park to Birstal, to converse and co-operate with John Nelson. Newcastle-on-Tyne, Knaresborough, Beeston near Leeds, Halifax, Dewsbury Moor, Mirfield, were then successively visited, after which he returned to Birstal; then again visiting Beeston, he went to Epworth, and preached on his father's tombstone in the churchyard. In all these places he preached with his usual earnestness and power. Having stayed some days in the vicinity of Epworth, he went to Sheffield, hoping to meet with David Taylor: in this he at first was

* "Methodist Magazine," 1794, pp. 311–13.

disappointed, but he preached there morning and evening; and on the next day David Taylor came, and Wesley had the desired conversation with him. The effect of the interview was important. This successful evangelist had suffered seriously in his mind from his intercourse with Mr. Ingham and the Moravians. The result of this conversation, Wesley says, made him "thoroughly sensible of his mistake;" * and he went on in the work of the Lord for a while again with diligence and success. Having accomplished this object, Wesley went on his way ministering the Gospel through Coventry, Evesham, Stroud, and Painswick, to Bristol.

Toward the latter part of this year he went again into the north, and his labours at Newcastle on that occasion were attended by a very special visitation of the Spirit. "There seemed in the evening to be a deeper work in many souls than I had observed before.....I never saw a work of God, in any other place, so evenly and gradually carried on."†

Methodist labour, persecution, and progress, 1743.

From the beginning of 1743, to June, 1744, when the first Conference was held, there elapsed a season of great labour, trial, danger, and success, to Wesley and his assistants.

The opening of this year found him journeying toward the north, between Doncaster and Epworth, Charles Wesley being in the neighbourhood of Bristol. At Epworth, he again preached on his father's tomb, and was afterward informed that the curate refused to allow him to receive the sacrament in the church. On January 3rd, he rode to Birstal, where he received a melancholy account of the effects of Moravian error on the stability and general character of the people: from thence he returned through

* WESLEY'S "Works," vol. ii., p. 421. † *Ibid.*, vol. i., pp. 378–9.

Sheffield, Wednesbury, Egginton, Stratford-on-Avon, Evesham, and Painswick, to Bristol, a day or two after his brother had left that city for London. Here he prosecuted a careful inquiry into the state of the Society, by speaking with every member individually; and rejoiced to find them neither "barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ."* About the end of the month he went to London, where, assisted by his brother, he made a similar visitation of the London Society: at the close of it he preached a sermon, when he made a collection of £50 toward the expense of building a chapel at Newcastle.

On the 14th of February, Wesley again left London for the north, and arrived in Newcastle on the 19th. Here, after preaching in the town and in some adjacent places, he read the Rules to the Society, and commenced a very careful examination into its condition. He was the more particular in this inquiry because of the great revival which had taken place here a few months before. The result was, that seventy-six had left the Society, and sixty-four were expelled. On Sunday, March 13th, he went to speak severally with the Society at Tanfield: the occasion made a powerful impression on his mind, and led to the following entry in his Journal: "From the terrible instances I met with here, (and, indeed, in all parts of England,) I am more and more convinced, that the devil himself desires nothing more than this, that the people of any place should be half awakened, and then left to themselves to fall asleep again. Therefore, I determine, by the grace of God, not to strike one stroke in any place where I cannot follow the blow."† He accordingly, during his stay in those parts, preached weekly at all the places which he had visited around Newcastle. During this period Charles

* Wesley's "Works," vol. i., p. 386. † *Ibid.*, p. 391.

Wesley was alternating his labours between the neighbourhood of Bristol and that of London.

Origin of Methodism in Leeds.

Having settled everything in Newcastle to his satisfaction, Wesley, on the 7th of April, left that town. On the next day, he says, "I preached at Knaresborough and at Leeds, on, 'By grace ye are saved through faith.' The three following days I divided between Leeds and Birstal."* In these words is recorded the first preaching of Wesley in that great centre of northern Methodism, Leeds. He makes no mention of any Society at Leeds at this time, neither does John Nelson; yet we are assured there was a class then in existence in that town. One of the ten members who constituted this class, and who died in York some years since, observed to a friend, with great delight and enthusiasm, "When Mr. Wesley first came to Leeds, we took him into Society; he did not take us in:" from which it is plain, that some fruit of the Gospel had been gathered together in that town, probably by John Nelson, before this period.

The Rev. George Morley, Governor of Woodhouse Grove School, when returning from the first Missionary Meeting held in Hull, (in 1814,) called at York to see this Christian woman, said then to be the oldest Methodist in the world, and had with her the following conversation:—"*Q.* Where did you first join the Society? *A.* In Leeds. *Q.* What preachers had you then in the Leeds Circuit? *A.* We had no travelling preachers. Leeds was not then a Circuit. *Q.* How were you supplied with the means of grace? *A.* Sometimes Mr. Wesley visited us. A local preacher came once a fortnight from Birstal on the Sunday morning: on the other Sunday evenings we held prayer-meetings among ourselves. We met our classes, and went to church.

* Wesley's "Works," vol. i., p. 394.

Q. What collections had you in your classes? *A.* The same as we have now. *Q.* As you had no preachers to support, how was the money applied? *A.* I cannot tell, but it was always wanted."

When Wesley left Leeds, he passed through Wednesbury to Bristol. At the former place he obtained information which evidently excited in him very fearful apprehensions; and these were afterward abundantly realized. He says, "The inexcusable folly of Mr. W——s had so provoked Mr. E——n, that his former love turned into bitter hatred. But he had not yet had time to work up the poor people into the rage and madness which afterward appeared, so that they were extremely quiet both this and the following days, while I improved the present opportunity, and exhorted them morning and evening to believe on the Lord Jesus, and to work out their own salvation with fear and trembling.

"Yet on Sunday, 17th, the scene began to open: I think I never heard so wicked a sermon, and delivered with such bitterness of voice and manner, as that which Mr. E——n preached in the afternoon. I knew what effect this must have in a little time; and therefore judged it expedient to prepare the poor people for what was to follow, that when it came they might not be offended. Accordingly on Tuesday, 19th, I strongly enforced these words of our Lord, 'If any man come after Me, and hate not his father and mother, yea, and his own life, he cannot be My disciple. And whosoever doth not bear his cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple.'" * After this service Wesley passed on to Bristol, and had, as he says, "a week of rest and peace."

It seems to have been intended that Charles Wesley

* Wesley's "Works," vol. i., p. 394.

should visit Cornwall about the middle of May;* but, instead of doing so, he set out for the north. In this journey he found that the passions of the lower classes had been so inflamed against the Methodists, that they were prepared for almost any acts of violence. During the early part of it he preached at Quinton, Evesham, Wednesbury, Walsal, Birmingham, Melbourne, Nottingham, and Sheffield. At Wednesbury he found a Society of above three hundred, "seeking full redemption in the all-cleansing blood;" but he also found the preaching of the clergy directed to stir up persecution against them. At Walsal a mob raged around him whilst preaching, and he was struck by many stones; and of Sheffield he says, "I came to the flock in Sheffield, who are as sheep in the midst of wolves."† This judgment was fully justified by the events that followed. On taking the pulpit in the evening, the congregation was beset with such a mob as Charles Wesley had never before seen. He was several times struck with stones. A military officer presented a drawn sword to his breast, when the man of God threw open his vest, saying, with a smile, "I fear God, and honour the king," upon which his furious assailant shrunk back confounded. After preaching, Charles Wesley, with many of the members of Society, retired to the house of Mr. Bennet, where they spent the night, whilst the mob still beset the house, and levelled the chapel with the ground. The next day Charles Wesley preached again, and the mob again rallied, and broke the windows of the dwelling-house where he was entertained; but they were at length intimidated by his firm and patient endurance, so that, after preaching the next morning at five, he left the town in peace. This,

Fearful riots at Wednesbury and Sheffield.

* Wesley's "Journal," May 17th, 1743.

† Charles Wesley's "Journal," vol. i., p. 309.

however, was no indication that the spirit of persecution had subsided; for, while riding to Barley Hall, in company with David Taylor, they were waylaid, and narrowly escaped being murdered, Taylor receiving a severe wound in his forehead.

At Birstal this Christian minister found a different scene; he preached in peace and safety. He also delivered the Gospel message at William Shent's door in Briggate, Leeds. Afterwards at the church, although five ministers were present, they would have him assist in administering the sacrament, and treated him with all honour. After the church service he again preached in the street.

During this visit to Leeds, Charles Wesley says, "I met the infant Society, about fifty in number, most of them justified, and exhorted them to walk circumspectly, since so much depended on the first witnesses." On the 30th of May he left Leeds for Newcastle, and by the way met with an accident, of which he has given the following account, which shows how he employed his time when travelling: "Near Ripley my horse threw and fell upon me. My companion thought I had broken my neck; but my leg only was bruised, my hand sprained, and my head stunned; which spoiled my *making hymns*, or thinking at all till next day." * He arrived at Newcastle on the 31st of May, and continued in that neighbourhood nearly three weeks.

Meanwhile, John Wesley, whilst labouring to build up and increase the Societies in and about London, heard of renewed and terrible persecution in Staffordshire. On receiving this account, he says, "I was not surprised at all; neither should I have wondered if, after the advices they had so often received from the pulpit, as well as from the

* Charles Wesley's "Journal," vol. i., p. 313.

episcopal chair, the zealous High Churchmen had rose and cut all that were Methodists in pieces." *

Resolved to afford his persecuted people all the countenance and support in his power, Wesley set out for Wednesbury, and arrived there on the 22nd of June. Having ascertained the facts of the late fearful riots, and consulted Counsellor Littleton at Tamworth on the proper course of proceeding, he met his brother at Nottingham, and then went on by the usual route to the north, preaching and visiting the Societies. He returned to London about the end of July.

Charles Wesley's first visit to Cornwall.

Before Wesley returned from the north, his brother commenced his promised journey to Cornwall. Passing through Bristol, Exeter, and Bodmin, he reached St. Ives, (July 16th,) at that time the head-quarters of Methodism in the west. Mr. Shepherd and another preacher had been some time labouring in this locality, and met Mr. Charles Wesley on his arrival. The little company of pious persons who had been accustomed to meet together here for Christian edification, like the good people of Leeds, gladly received the Wesleys and their preachers. Here also, as in Wednesbury and other places, he found the clergy exerting their utmost efforts to stir up the people against the new sect. The consequence was a series of most disgraceful riots, very dangerous to the lives of the Methodists and their ministers, and destructive to their property. During these seasons of violence the preaching-house at St. Ives was gutted, and the benches and furniture destroyed; and both there and at Towednock the preacher and congregation were savagely assaulted. The first time Charles Wesley preached at Pool in Illogan, midway between Camborne and Redruth, a drunken miner endeavoured to pull him

* Wesley's "Works," vol. i., p. 397.

down, but he was soon removed by the congregation. On the second occasion, the churchwarden, heading a mob, drove the preacher and congregation to the border of the parish; when, leaving them there, he returned and rewarded his followers with drink in the old alehouse at Pool; and the following entry may now be found in the parish book of Illogan: "Expences at Ann Gartrell's on driving the Methodist, nine shillings."

Notwithstanding this furious persecution, Mr. Charles Wesley remained preaching in every part of West Cornwall, with great success, until the first week in August, when he returned by Exeter and Bridport to London, intending to take part, with his brother and John Nelson, in a conference with the leaders of the Moravians: but Mr. Spangenberg, who had promised to attend, had left England; so the interview never took place.

In less than a month after Charles Wesley left the western counties, his brother, travelling through Exeter and Bodmin, arrived at St. Ives. John Nelson on this occasion accompanied him to Cornwall, and his "Journal" affords important information respecting the Methodism of this period, especially in the west. Nelson set out from London in company with another preacher, Thomas Richards. They had but one horse between them, and came through Oxford and Cirencester to Bristol, preaching in the towns by the way. After staying a few days, and preaching at Bristol and Bath, Nelson and Downes, another preacher, proceeded toward Cornwall with Wesley; but at this time also Nelson and Downes together had but one horse. Wesley was accompanied by Mr. Shepherd, who had for some time previously been preaching in Cornwall. They appear each to have had a horse; for Nelson says, "We generally set out before Mr. Wesley and Mr. Shepherd."

Having reached St. Ives, Wesley's first care was to make a careful examination of the Society. He found them about one hundred and twenty in number; near a hundred of these had found peace with God.*

Wesley's privations and sufferings in Cornwall.

The pecuniary resources of these devoted men were at this time very slender. As soon, therefore, as they were fairly at their journey's end, Nelson went to work at his trade as a mason; and soon afterward Mr. Downes, being taken ill of fever, was for a time laid aside. Wesley and Shepherd immediately began to preach, and in the evenings were joined in these labours by Nelson. In a short time they spread the Gospel most abundantly over the narrow peninsula of West Cornwall. The hardships they endured in the prosecution of this godly work are faintly shadowed out by Nelson in his Journal. As soon as he had finished his job of work, he also fully devoted himself to preaching; and of this period he says, "All this time Mr. Wesley and I lay on the floor; he had my great-coat for his pillow, and I had Burkitt's 'Notes on the New Testament' for mine. After being here near three weeks, one morning, about three o'clock, Mr. Wesley turned over, and, finding me awake, clapped me on the side, saying, 'Brother Nelson, let us be of good cheer; I have one whole side yet, for the skin is off but on one side.' We usually preached on the commons, going from one common to another; and it was but seldom any one asked us to eat or drink. One day we had been at St. Hilary Downs, and Mr. Wesley had preached from Ezekiel's vision of dry bones, and there was a shaking among the people as he preached. As we returned, Mr. Wesley stopped his horse to pick the blackberries, saying, 'Brother Nelson, we ought to be thankful that there are plenty of blackberries; for this is the best

* Wesley's "Works," vol. i., p. 403.

county I ever saw for getting a stomach, but the worst that ever I saw for getting food. Do the people think we can live by preaching?' I said, 'I know not what they may think; but one asked me to eat something as I came from St. Just, when I ate heartily of barley bread and honey.' He said, 'You are well off; I had a thought of begging a crust of bread of the woman where I met the people at Morvah, but forgot it till I had got some distance from the house.'" Wesley says, that the last morning of his stay he was waked between three and four by a company of miners, who, fearing they should be too late for the five o'clock preaching, had assembled around the house, and were singing hymns. He left Cornwall on September 22nd, but Nelson remained a fortnight longer.

Wesley arrived in Bristol from his Cornish tour on the 24th of September, and, after spending a Sabbath in the city, on the 26th set out for Wales. On this occasion he incidentally states, that he rode three miles out of his way to give some godly counsel to a young man who had crossed the ferry with him. After visiting the Societies, and preaching in Wales, he returned to Bristol, October 3rd. Here he stayed a fortnight, during which time he was enabled to pay off the "public debt" of the Society by the contributions from the classes. Having placed things in order at Bristol, on October 17th he left that city for the north. Preaching at Painswick and Quinton, he came to Wednesbury, where he also preached, when a cry arose that the mob had beset the house; and he soon after went out to them, on which they hurried him in a most violent manner to the residence of a justice of the peace; who refused to see him, saying he was in bed. They then determined to take him to another justice at Walsal. He also sent to say he was in bed. The fury of the mob being

cooled by this long night march, they determined to take him back again; but by this time a new enemy appeared. A mob much greater from Walsal quickly dispersed those who would now have defended their prisoner, and seized Wesley as their prey. Here he was placed in the most imminent danger. Yet, although they furiously threatened to kill him, he was preserved as by miracle, and about ten at night was enabled to return to his friends at Wednesbury.

At this time Charles Wesley was returning from the north. On the 20th of October he preached at Nottingham Cross, and found the Society increased in six months from eleven to fifty. The next day Wesley arrived there. "He looked," said Charles, "like a soldier of Christ; his clothes were torn to tatters;" a proof that Wesley's account of the loss of one flap of his waistcoat is a very modest statement.*

This course of travel, preaching, persecution, and success, continued with little interruption or variety of circumstances; so that for the remainder of the chapter it will only be necessary to notice the more prominent facts, without going into detail. Wesley proceeded from Nottingham to Newcastle, where he spent three weeks; after

* The temper in which these cruel persecutions were endured, the source to which the Wesleys looked for support, and their devout thanksgiving after being delivered, are finely exhibited in a hymn written by Charles after one of these tumults. It is numbered 276 in the Wesleyan collection; the first stanza being:—

"Worship, and thanks, and blessing,
And strength ascribe to Jesus!
Jesus alone Defends His own,
When earth and hell oppress us.
Jesus with joy we witness
Almighty to deliver;
Our seals set to, That God is true,
And reigns a King for ever."

which he returned by Leeds, Birstal, and Nottingham, to London, where he arrived early in December. Charles Wesley, on his return from Nottingham, visited the Societies in Wales, and returned by Bristol, Kingswood, Bath, and Cirencester, to London, where the brothers were together at the end of 1743.

Early in 1744 Charles Wesley again journeyed to the north. He was furiously persecuted and placed in great danger at Nottingham; and, on his return from Newcastle, he met Mr. Westall on a common, who had been driven from Nottingham by the joint efforts of the mob and the mayor. On his return to London he raised £60, which he sent to alleviate the sufferings of the poor persecuted Methodists at Wednesbury. During the spring Wesley again visited Cornwall. At St. Ives he found the preaching house demolished. The poor people had been excited to such a state of frenzy against the Methodists, that on hearing that Admiral Mathews had beaten the Spaniards, they knew of no way to manifest their joy but by destroying the chapel. And this spirit was still frequently evinced; Wesley himself, during this visit, as well as the other preachers and people, being often assailed with stones and dirt, while engaged in worship, or even when passing through the streets. After spending about a fortnight in preaching, visiting the Societies, and counselling the preachers, Wesley went to Devonshire, crossed the Channel to Wales, and proceeded by Bristol to the north, whence he returned to London two or three days before he had appointed the first Conference to meet.

It would be gratifying here to present the reader with an accurate general view of the state of Methodism at the close of this, the first period of its existence. But sufficient materials for such an epitome do not exist. The following

collection of facts must therefore be taken, instead of a more ample summary.

State of Methodism, June, 1744.

Wesley, it must be remembered, had at this time been pursuing his itinerant course about five years. What then were the results of these labours? He had in connexion with him as fellow labourers about forty-five preachers, including two or three ministers of the Establishment, who delighted to co-operate with him. These were not all of them continually engaged in preaching; several, like John Nelson and William Shent, occasionally laboured for their support at secular employments, and then again fully gave themselves to the work of evangelists; but it is well known that besides these there were a considerable number of local preachers throughout the country. Societies had been formed in very many of the principal towns from the Land's End to Newcastle. The number of members is not known; but there must have been nearly two thousand in London, if not more; and the aggregate of them throughout the country must have been several thousands. The mass of persons brought under evangelical teaching by means of this ministry, but who were not members, would be very much larger. John Nelson had preached the first Methodist lay sermon in Manchester in 1743, and a work of grace with hopeful indications had begun in that locality. This work was not carried on at a time when there existed a general agreement as to the essential doctrines of the Gospel, or when the law was fairly and universally administered for the protection of individual life and property. On the contrary, the Wesleys had to rescue the great doctrines of the Reformation from the oblivion into which they had to a great extent fallen; to collect and simplify the experimental divinity of the Church of England, and thus to bring the sterling doctrines of the Gospel in a

popular and effective manner to bear on the public mind; and, in addition to all this, to maintain the truth against every kind of practical and theoretical error. They were by these means enabled to bring the Gospel in mighty aggression on the inert mass of profanity, ungodliness, and formality, which characterized the population of that day. In the prosecution of these labours they had to bear the violent censures of ecclesiastics, the stern contempt of the upper classes, and the bloody violence of wild and lawless mobs. Yet through all these difficulties they urged their way. By their instrumentality the light of the Gospel shone in many places, and a hopeful dawn gleamed through all the land. But notwithstanding all this, the first Conference was held in the midst of severe trial and persecution. John Nelson was at that time deprived of his liberty, and subjected to all kinds of indignity, because, having been impressed for preaching, he refused to serve as a soldier. But Methodism had through much labour and suffering obtained such a hold in the country, that the Wesleys saw good reason to hope that the great object at which they aimed would be accomplished,—that they would succeed, at least to some good extent, in spreading scriptural holiness throughout the land.

CHAPTER II.

FROM THE FIRST CONFERENCE TO THAT OF 1765.

The first Conference, 1744; its constitution, character, and design.

THE first Conference was a meeting of the pious clergymen who had generally countenanced and supported Wesley, and of his lay assistants. He requested the attendance of these persons, and has left on record his object in doing so. "In 1744 I wrote to several clergymen, and to all who then served me as sons in the Gospel, desiring them to meet me in London, and to give me their advice concerning the best method of carrying on the work of God." *

This Conference was held at the Foundery in London, and began on Monday, June 25th, 1744. There were present, John Wesley, Charles Wesley, John Hodges, rector of Wenvo, Henry Piers, vicar of Bexley, Samuel Taylor, vicar of Quinton, and John Meriton, a clergyman from the Isle of Man. Thomas Richards, Thomas Maxfield, John Bennett, and John Downes, were the lay preachers present.†

* WESLEY'S "Works," vol. viii., p. 300.

† These names are not given in the octavo edition of the "Minutes;" and it may be proper here to observe, that they are obtained from a source of information unknown, it is believed, to any previous writer on Methodism. Wesley first published the Minutes of the early Conferences in Dublin, 1749; and, for some reasons which are not stated, he gave them to the world in two separate tracts; one containing the discussions principally bearing on theology, the other those mainly referring to discipline. The first of these was re-published in the octavo "Minutes," and was generally considered as the only information remaining with regard to these Conferences, the other having been quite lost and forgotten, until a copy of both tracts bound up with one of the early hymn-books was accidentally discovered by the Rev.

When the clergymen were assembled, "first it was inquired, whether any of our lay brethren should be present at the Conference? And it was agreed to invite from time to time such of them as we should judge proper. It was then asked, 'Which of them shall we invite to-day?' And the answer was, 'Thomas Richards, Thomas Maxfield, John Bennett, and John Downes,' who were accordingly brought in."*

Considering the very great and long-continued influence which the Methodist Conference has exerted at home and abroad, too much importance can scarcely be attached to the principles recognised, and the practice adopted, at the first of these assemblies.

No sooner, then, was the first Conference constituted by the meeting of these ten persons, than the following was laid down as an elementary law for the government of the meeting: "It is desired that everything be considered as in the immediate presence of God;" and "that we may meet with a single eye, and as little children who have everything to learn; that every point may be examined from the foundation; that every person may speak freely what is in his heart; and that every question proposed may be fully debated, and 'bolted to the bran.'"

The first preliminary question was then proposed, namely, "How far does each of us agree to submit to the unanimous judgment of the rest?" It was answered, "In speculative things, each can only submit so far as his judgment shall be

Joseph Hargreaves on a book-stall in London, and purchased by him. By the kindness of this minister, whose property the book still is, the author is enabled to give the first complete account of the early Conferences. The quotations from this scarce and invaluable tract are marked on the following pages as extracts from the "*Disciplinary Minutes*," and distinguished by the page of the tract, or the year of their occurrence.

* "Disciplinary Minutes," p. 3.

convinced. In every practical point, so far as we can, without wounding our several consciences."

To the second preliminary question,—namely, "How far should any of us mention to others what may be mentioned here?"—it was replied, "Not one word which may be here spoken of persons should be mentioned elsewhere. Nothing at all, unless so far as we may be convinced the glory of God requires it. And from time to time we will consider on each head, 'Is it for the glory of God, that what we have now spoken should be mentioned again?'" *

These preliminaries having been arranged, and earnest prayer offered up to God, the first great design of this meeting was proposed under three heads; namely, to "consider, 1. What to teach; 2. How to teach; 3. What to do: that is, how to regulate our doctrine, discipline, and practice." Under the first head, a conversation was continued throughout this and the following day, which embraced the leading doctrines of the Gospel, such as justification, saving faith, the relation of faith to sin and works, righteousness, imputed righteousness, sanctification, &c. On the Wednesday morning discipline was considered. Here the nature and position of the Church of England were discussed, and the way in which they were to support it. The right of private judgment, and the extent of submission to ecclesiastical authority, were next considered, and the effect of Methodist labours on the interests of the Church.

Earliest Methodist organization, and employment of lay assistants.

On Thursday, the nature and extent of Methodist organization, as then existing, were considered. This is shown in the following questions and answers: "*Q.* How are the people divided who desire to be under your care? *A.* Into the United Societies, the Bands, the Select Societies,

* "Disciplinary Minutes," p. 4.

and the Penitents. *Q.* How do these differ from each other? *A.* The United Societies (which are the largest of all) consist of awakened persons: part of these, who are supposed to have remission of sins, are more closely united in the Bands. Those of the Bands who seem to walk in the light of God, compose the Select Societies: those of them who are for the present fallen from grace, meet apart as Penitents."

The Rules for the United Societies, (the present Society Rules,) and the Rules for the Bands and Select Societies, were then read. No separate Rules had at that time been prepared for the Penitents. Indeed, neither these, nor the Select Societies, appear to have long continued distinct sections of the Methodist body.

The duties of ministers, lay assistants, leaders, and other officers were then briefly considered, as was the lawfulness of field preaching. It was then asked, "Where should we endeavour to preach most? *A.* 1. Where we can preach in the church. 2. Where there is an open door, quiet and willing hearers. 3. Where there is the greatest increase of souls. *Q.* What is the best way of spreading the Gospel? *A.* To go a little and little farther from London, Bristol, St. Ives, Newcastle, or any other Society. So a little leaven would spread with more effect and less noise, and help would always be at hand. *Q.* What is the best general method in preaching? *A.* 1. To invite. 2. To convince. 3. To offer Christ. Lastly, to build up; and to do this, in some measure, in every sermon." *

From this it is evident that London, Bristol, St. Ives, and Newcastle, were regarded as the great centres of Methodism in England at that period. There is a variety

* "Disciplinary Minutes," pp. 4, 5.

of other matters found in the ordinary edition of the Minutes, as having been arranged on this day; but they were the work of future years, and are injudiciously inserted at this early period.*

On Friday, June 29th, the employment of lay assistants was considered. The following questions and answers are on record, as the result of this inquiry: "*Q.* Are lay assistants allowable? *A.* Only in cases of necessity. *Q.* What is the office of our assistants? *A.* In the absence of the minister, to feed and guide, to teach and govern, the flock." This answer is afterwards elaborated in seven particular classes of duty. Then follows the question, "What are the rules of an assistant?" which is answered by thirteen Rules, which are substantially the same with the twelve Rules of a Helper, as found in the "Large Minutes;" † only the latter are given in more guarded language, and are more finished and complete in manner and substance. Other questions and answers advise assistants to keep journals, to avoid formality, and to preach against it; and give an affirmative answer to the questions, "Is it lawful to bear arms? Is it lawful to use the law?"

It is scarcely possible to conceive that the interlocutors in these conversations could have had more than a very vague idea of the grand operations for which they were

* This circumstance is explained in some degree by a foot-note, page 9, (octavo edition of "Minutes,") which says, "Some of the following rules and regulations which we find placed under this date and that of June 29th, (the following day,) seem evidently to have been made in some future Conferences, although all previous to the year 1763, in which that extract of the 'Minutes' was published from which we copy them." When, however, the "Minutes" set down under these two days are compared with the two tracts of "Minutes" before mentioned, and which were published by Wesley in 1749, it will be found that nearly (if not quite) all of them belong to future years.

† Wesley's "Works," vol. viii., p. 298.

just then preparing a suitable platform. They had indeed already done and suffered much in the service of their Master. They had, through evil report and good report, proclaimed Christ crucified, as the Saviour of sinners, from the Land's End to Newcastle. But these efforts, great and successful as they were, appeared as isolated and irregular exertions. Now, for the first time, we behold Wesley, and his friends and followers, acting in unison, with the grand object of saving souls from death. They are not found elaborating an ecclesiastical structure; there is no peculiar doctrine or practice which is the badge of their profession, and the centre of their unity: they simply aim at knowing the truth taught in the Bible, and using it so as to turn sinners from the error of their ways, and train them up in holiness.

Important results of this Conference.

Here are the Wesleys, with a few clergymen and laymen,—only ten persons altogether; yet, undeterred by the paucity of their number, or the limited extent of their means, they meditate an aggression on the world. For this purpose all the essential doctrines of the Gospel are carefully considered, all the vital interests of a Christian Church are investigated, every duty which relates to the Christian ministry is canvassed; all these matters are earnestly pondered, in the light of Holy Scripture, and under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, and with an uniform aim to save souls. By these conversations they become of one mind and of one spirit, and separate, to renew their course of action in the world, with one definite object,—to save themselves and their hearers. From this small but sound beginning, what consequences have resulted to the nation and the world!

It does not appear that at this time any formal division of the country into Circuits had been made. Nor, in the

discussions which then took place, is mention made of the appointment of any preacher to any given place or duty. It may be fairly presumed that the progress of Methodism at this period was not sufficient to call for such an arrangement; and that the appointment of the laymen to their several spheres of action was so fully recognised as the right and duty of Wesley, that it required no discussion. The thirteenth Rule for the assistants, as laid down in this Conference, was as follows: "Act in all things not according to your own will, but *as a son in the Gospel.* As such, it is your part to employ your time in that manner that we direct: partly in visiting the flock from house to house, (the sick in particular,) partly in such a course of reading, meditation, and prayer, as we advise from time to time. Above all, if you labour with us in our Lord's vineyard, it is needful you should do that part of the work which we direct, at those times and places which we judge most for His glory." * These words convey the spirit and substance of the compact made between the founder of Methodism and his preachers.

At the conclusion of the Conference, Wesley and his fellow labourers returned to their evangelical labours, with renewed devotedness and zeal. Five days thus spent must have had a happy effect on the minds of such men. Wesley said of them, "They desire nothing but to save their own souls, and those that hear them;" and added, with undoubted truth, "And surely, as long as they continue thus minded, their labour shall not be in vain in the Lord." †

Labours and journeys of the Wesleys.

The first duty which engaged the personal attention of Wesley and his brother, after the close of this Conference, was a searching investigation into the state of the

* "Disciplinary Minutes," p. 7. † "Journal," June 25th, 1744.

Thomas Coke

London Society. They exerted themselves to purge it of all who did not walk according to the Gospel, and thus reduced the number of members to less than 1,900.

About a fortnight after the Conference, Charles Wesley, with Mr. Meriton, set out from London for Cornwall. At Sticklepath he found an aged clergyman, who had been sent to meet him by Mr. Thompson, the pious rector of St. Ginnys. This minister was an acquaintance of Samuel Wesley, of Epworth, and had been brought to a saving acquaintance with the Gospel by hearing Mr. Thompson preach salvation by faith. Mr. Charles Wesley was conducted by him to St. Ginnys, where he preached in the church twice on the next day, Sunday, July 15th. On the following day he preached in the church at Laneast, at the request of Mr. Bennett, the minister; and on the day after came to the neighbourhood of Gwennap. On seeing the state of the country, he writes in his Journal: "Here a little one is become a thousand. What an amazing work hath God done in one year! The whole country is alarmed, and gone forth after the sound of the Gospel. In vain do the pulpits ring of Popery, madness, enthusiasm! Our preachers are daily pressed to new places, and enabled to preach five or six times a day. Persecution is kept off till the seed takes root. Societies are springing up everywhere; and still the cry from all sides is, 'Come and help us.'" These clergymen continued nearly three weeks preaching everywhere to large congregations with great acceptance and success. During this visit the raging of persecution was mercifully stayed. Mr. Wesley speaks of one stone, and but one, having been thrown at them while walking near the quay at St. Ives; and this is the more remarkable as about a fortnight before a furious mob had paraded the streets at midnight, and had broken the win-

dows in the houses of all who were supposed to be attached to Methodism. On their return from the west, Mr. Charles Wesley again preached at St. Ginnys and Laneast. The scene in the latter church must have been very strange and exciting. The preacher was bearing his earnest testimony against what are called "harmless diversions;" and added, "'I was by them kept dead to God, asleep in the devil's arms, secure in a state of damnation, for eighteen years.' Mr. Meriton added aloud, 'And I for twenty-five.' 'And I,' cried Mr. Thompson, 'for thirty-five.' 'And I,' said Mr. Bennett, 'for above seventy.'"* After preaching at some places in the north of Devon, he crossed the Channel to Wales, visited the Societies, preached at different places, and arrived on the 17th of August at Bristol.

Wesley had, during this year, to expel T. Williams, one of the preachers, from the Society, for making and circulating a false and scandalous report respecting Mr. Charles Wesley. This defamation, though greatly palliated by a subsequent writer, was perpetrated under circumstances of peculiar atrocity, and for a while greatly affected Mr. Charles Wesley's health and spirits, until, like David, he turned his sorrows into songs, and poured forth the griefs of his soul in beautiful but very mournful verse.

The preachers stationed in Cornwall at this time were Henry Millard and Thomas Westall; and they and their people appear to have been greatly persecuted almost the whole of the summer, except the short time that Mr. Charles Wesley was in the west. Wesley says, in his Journal, "All this summer our brethren in the west had as hot service as those in the north of England; the war against the Methodists, so called, being everywhere carried

* Charles Wesley's "Journal," vol. i., p. 376.

on with far more vigour than that against the Spaniards."* In September, Mr. Westall was arrested whilst preaching at Camborne, taken to Penzance, and committed to Bodmin by three justices. He had to lie in gaol until the next quarter-sessions, when his committal was declared to be contrary to law, and he was discharged.

Wesley himself remained in and about London and Bristol from the Conference until near the middle of February, when, with Richard Moss, who was received into the house at the Foundery as a servant in 1744, and was now for the first time employed as an itinerant preacher, he set out for the north. On reaching Newcastle, Wesley made the following entry in his Journal: "Many a rough journey have I had before, but one like this I never had: between wind, and hail, and rain, and ice, and snow, and driving sleet, and piercing cold: but it is past; those days will return no more, and are therefore as though they had never been.

'Pain, disappointment, sickness, strife,
Whate'er molests or troubles life,
However grievous in its stay
It shakes the tenement of clay,
When past as nothing we esteem,
And pain, like pleasure, is a dream.'"

Wesley remained in the neighbourhood of Newcastle until about the middle of April. In this way he carried out the plan he had laid down, of carefully attending to the Societies where they had been gathered, and then extending the Gospel message to places beyond.

Release of John Nelson. Francis Scott, of Wakefield,

On the 29th of July, 1744, John Nelson was released from his captivity,—it is said, mainly through the influence of the Countess of Huntingdon,—and permitted to retire from his compulsory soldiership. The next day he preached

* Wesley's "Works," vol. i., p. 445.

and William Shent, of Leeds.

in the chapel at Newcastle, and then returned to Yorkshire, where he renewed his course of untiring devotedness and zeal.

Mention should here be made of Mr. Francis Scott, of Wakefield, a companion spirit of Nelson, Bennett, and Reeves, who had now begun to preach. He was a joiner and cabinet-maker in Westgate, Wakefield, and was rendered very useful in bringing sinners to God. His brother John, who also was a local preacher, was his foreman, to whom Francis made an offer of a part of his business; but John refused, saying, "I would rather decline, as I can now put off the world every Saturday night with my apron." John, however, taking the entire management of the business in the absence of his brother, left Francis at liberty to prosecute those labours in which he so much delighted. He was frequently out ten days or a fortnight at once, riding his own horse, and defraying his own expenses; and took his turn with William Shent and others in visiting Newcastle. They even went as far as Musselburgh in Scotland, and were also introduced by John Bennett into Derbyshire and Cheshire. Mr. Francis Scott was the first person in Wakefield who took the Methodist preachers into his house. He also fitted up a building in his yard as a chapel, with a pulpit at one end, and a gallery at the other; the intermediate space being filled with forms. When Wesley came into this neighbourhood, Mr. Scott's house was the place to which all the preachers in the surrounding district came to seek advice and direction from their chief.

Allusion has been made to William Shent; and the important part which he took in the early dissemination of the Gospel in Yorkshire, renders it necessary to give a brief notice of him here. Some time after John Nelson established regular preaching at Birstal, he wrote in his

Journal, "Now the people from every quarter flocked to Birstal on the Sabbath, but as yet there came only three from Leeds,—Mary Shent, and two other women." * The two others were Mary Weddale and Mary Maude; and the three together were frequently called "the three Marys." They were the first Methodists in Leeds. William Shent was a barber in Briggate. His wife, having heard, from his customers in the shop, of Nelson's preaching at Birstal, and of Wesley's occasional visits there, determined to go and hear for herself. Having induced her two acquaintances to accompany her, they took some food in their pockets, walked to Birstal, heard Nelson preach, retired to a field, sat down by a hedge and ate their dinner: then they attended preaching in the afternoon, and returned to Leeds in the evening. It is said that, on the first visit of this kind which they paid to Birstal, Mary Shent was converted, and returned home happy in God.

William Shent, moved by the representations of his wife, was induced to hear Mr. Charles Wesley or Mr. Graves, and was by means of Methodist preaching brought to a knowledge of the truth. "His conversion," says John Nelson, "made an uproar in Leeds," because he said he knew his sins were forgiven. There was then no Society in the town, nor any meetings for worship in connexion with the Methodists. It has therefore been a great question how his simple tale of finding mercy should make a general uproar. But the circumstances of the case explain the difficulty. William Shent was a barber who occupied a well-accustomed shop; and having found the pearl of great price, he freely told his customers of the fact. The intelligence was novel: some went to the shop on purpose to hear the strange tale; and, as he did not wish "to eat

* Nelson's "Journal," p. 70.

his morsel alone," he made a point of speaking to all on the subject. The rich and the poor alike heard what God had done for him. This did much to direct public attention in Leeds to Methodism, and a large upper room was soon after obtained, preaching established, and a small Society formed. For about twelve months, the preaching-place in Leeds was a building in Rockley Hall Yard; next, a house in East Street; after which, they obtained possession of Ingram Hall, a commodious and more suitable building, which stood at the foot of Richmond Hill. Wesley preached here on his return from Newcastle, in April, 1745. Afterward, as he informs us, at John Bennett's request, he preached at several places in Lancashire and Cheshire. On one of these occasions, a scene was presented which, although perhaps not very uncommon in those days, may serve to show to the Methodists of our time the thirst for the word of the Lord which influenced some who then heard the Gospel. A young man named Pedley, from Congleton, being in London, working at his trade, heard Mr. Whitefield preach, and was much impressed with his sermon. This induced him to buy a copy of one of Whitefield's printed Discourses, and to send it to his father at Congleton. It happened that this tract fell into the hands of a young man named Thomas Buckley, of Astbury. At first he saw nothing particular in the sermon, but after a while light shone upon his mind; he read the Bible and the Prayer Book as new books; and, either through his instrumentality or that of others, his wife and some of their neighbours were similarly impressed. Just then it was reported that the Methodists preached at old Mary Aldersley's, at Shrigley Fold, near Macclesfield; and, being anxious to hear the Gospel, they went there, and were much edified by what they heard. They afterwards

learned that John Wesley, on his return from Newcastle, was to preach on a certain evening at Rode Hall, the residence of Roger Moss, about five miles from Congleton. "When the night came," says Thomas, "six or seven of us went. My wife carried a child, which was eight months old, in her apron. When we arrived, there was Mr. Wesley and three more preachers. Mr. Wesley preached from Rom. iii. 23. He gave notice for preaching at five o'clock on the following morning. We got leave of Roger Moss to sit by the fire all night." * Such was the eagerness felt for the word of the Lord in those days.

After his return from the north, Wesley went into Cornwall, then the seat of a furious and general persecution. In company with Mr. Shepherd, he visited all the Societies, preached everywhere to crowded congregations, but was frequently placed in the most imminent peril. The clergy and gentry took the lead in these scandalous outrages on all law and order. Mr. Thomas Maxfield was arrested, and offered to a man-of-war lying in Mount's Bay. The officer refusing to take him, he was put into a dungeon at Penzance, and afterwards delivered to one who was to act as an officer, and to keep him in custody, that he might be sent to serve as a soldier. Wesley remained in Cornwall about six weeks, and returned through Wales to Bristol just in time for the meeting of Conference.

The second Conference, 1745. Origin and progress of church government.

The second Conference was held at Bristol, and began on the 1st of August, 1745. There were present, John Wesley, Charles Wesley, John Hodges, Thomas Richards, Samuel Larwood, Thomas Meyrick, Richard Moss, John Slocombe, Herbert Jenkins, and Marmaduke Gwynne: there was, therefore, besides the two Wesleys, at this Con-

* Dyson's "Wesleyan Methodism in Congleton," p. 20.

ference, but one clergyman, Mr. Hodges, rector of Wenvo, the other seven being laymen. Of this meeting Wesley wrote, "We had our second Conference with as many of the brethren who labour in the word as could be present." On this occasion, the theological points mooted at the first Conference were carefully reviewed: the opinions then given, and the forms of expression in which they were conveyed, were now very carefully scrutinized, and in some cases modified. The fidelity of the preachers also, in respect of the rules that had been laid down, was considered, and suitable admonitions were administered.

The greatest precaution was also taken by Wesley in enacting suitable rules for the discussions at these annual Conferences. It was accordingly decided that "care should be taken to check no one, either by word or look, even though he should say what is quite wrong." And, "that every point might be fully debated and thoroughly settled," it was resolved "to beware of making haste, or of showing or indulging any impatience, whether of delay or contradiction." *

On Saturday, August 3rd, a long and very important discussion, of which no mention whatever is made in the octavo Minutes, took place on "points of discipline." This conversation opened with the following questions and answers:—"*Q.* Can he be a spiritual governor of the Church, who is not a believer, not a member of it? *A.* It seems not: though he may be a governor in outward things, by a power derived from the king. *Q.* What are properly the laws of the Church of England? *A.* The rubrics; and to these we submit as an ordinance of man for the Lord's sake. *Q.* Is not the will of our governors a law? *A.* No; not of any governor, temporal or spiritual. Therefore, if any bishop wills that I should not preach the

* "Disciplinary Minutes," p. 8.

Gospel, his will is no law to me. *Q.* But what if he produce a law against your preaching? *A.* I am to obey God rather than man. *Q.* Is Episcopal, Presbyterian, or Independent Church government most agreeable to reason? *A.* The plain origin of Church government seems to be this: Christ sends forth a preacher of the Gospel. Some who hear him, repent, and believe the Gospel. They then desire him to watch over them, to build them up in the faith, and to guide their souls in the paths of righteousness. Here, then, is an Independent congregation; subject to no pastor but their own, neither liable to be controlled in things spiritual by any other man or body of men whatsoever. But soon after, some from other parts who are occasionally present, while he speaks in the name of Him that sent him, beseech him to come over to help them also. Knowing it to be the will of God, he consents; yet not till he has conferred with the wisest and holiest of his congregation, and with their advice appointed one, or more, who has gifts and grace, to watch over the flock till his return. If it please God to raise a flock in the new place, before he leaves them, he does the same thing; appointing one whom God has fitted for the work, to watch over these souls also. In like manner, in every place where it pleases God to gather a little flock by his word, he appoints one, in his absence, to take the oversight of the rest, and to assist them of the ability which God giveth. These are deacons, or servants of the Church, and look on the first pastor as their common father. And all these congregations regard him in the same light, and esteem him still as the shepherd of their souls.

"These congregations are not absolutely independent. They depend on one pastor, though not on one another. As these congregations increase, and as their deacons grow

in years and grace, they need other subordinate deacons or helpers; in respect of whom they may be called presbyters or elders; as their father in the Lord may be called the bishop or overseer of them all. *Q.* Is mutual consent absolutely necessary between the pastor and the flock? *A.* No question: I cannot guide any soul, unless he consent to be guided by me. Neither can any soul force me to guide him, if I consent not. *Q.* Does the ceasing of this consent on either side dissolve the relation? *A.* It must in the very nature of things. If a man no longer consent to be guided by me, I am no longer his guide, I am free. If one will not guide me any longer, I am free to seek one who will. *Q.* But is the shepherd free to leave his sheep, or the sheep to leave their shepherd? *A.* Yes, if one or the others are convinced, it is for the glory of God, and the superior good of their souls. *Q.* How shall we treat those who leave us? *A.* 1. Beware of all sharpness, or bitterness, or resentment. 2. Talk with them once or twice at least. 3. If they persist in their design, consider them as dead, and name them not except in prayer." *

Further questions and answers elicited opinions that the existing Societies were as many as Wesley could at that time adequately superintend; that therefore it might be advisable to preach in some large towns, and more especially in Wales and Cornwall, without forming any new Societies. It was also said, that a course too timid or pusillanimous had been taken with regard to the opposing clergy; and that, whenever occasion offered, such should not only be answered, but that the charge should be retorted. "Their mouths must be stopped, (only in meekness and love,) and the eyes of others opened." It was

* "Disciplinary Minutes," pp. 9–12.

also held to be desirable to converse more with the clergy, and even with persecutors.

It was then asked, with respect to the lay helpers, "*Q.* Should any other rule be added to the twelve? *A.* Only this: 'You have nothing to do but to save souls. Therefore spend and be spent in this work. And go always not only to those who want you, but to those who want you most.'"* Throughout these Minutes the lay preachers are uniformly called "*assistants;*" and yet, in answer to the next question, some of them are evidently selected from the others as special assistants of Wesley in the supervision of the work of God throughout the country. "*Q.* Who are our present assistants? *A.* Jonathan Reeves, James Wheatley, John Nelson, John Bennett, John Trembath, Francis Walker, Thomas Richards, John Downes, Thomas Westall, James Jones, Samuel Larwood, Henry Millard, Thomas Maxfield, Thomas Meyrick."†

Almost immediately after this Conference, the country was thrown into violent commotion by the arrival in Scotland of Prince Charles Edward Stuart, who, being joined by some Scotch chieftains, unfurled his standard, and proclaimed war against the House of Hanover, as usurping the throne of Great Britain, which he claimed for his father. When this intelligence was announced, Wesley was preaching and visiting the Societies in Yorkshire. At Leeds, he says, the mob pelted him and the congregation with stones and dirt on their way home from worship. This was rather unusual in that place; for, in consequence of the friendly bearing of the clergy, and the sensible conduct of the magistrates, the Methodists up to this time had been persecuted less in Leeds than in any other large town where they preached extensively.

* "Disciplinary Minutes," p. 12. † *Ibid.*

On hearing the intelligence of the rebellion, Wesley hastened to Newcastle, where he found the inhabitants in the utmost consternation; the news having just arrived, that the Pretender had entered Edinburgh. Soon afterwards, intelligence was received that the rebels had defeated the king's troops at Preston Pans, in which action the brave and pious Colonel Gardiner fell. This victory greatly increased the alarm of the country. The mayor of Newcastle summoned the townsmen to meet him at the Town Hall, for the purpose of taking measures for the defence of the town. Wesley wrote a pious and spirited letter to the mayor, inculcated everywhere the soundest loyalty, and preached incessantly. He remained in Newcastle and the neighbourhood until November 4th. When it was known that the rebel army had crossed the border, and were marching southward, Wesley returned to London, preaching by the way at Bilston and Wednesbury. In March, 1746, he was again in the north, in company with Mr. Downes and Mr. Shepherd.

The third Conference, 1746. Mode of examining lay preachers. First list of Circuits.

The third Conference was held at Bristol, May 12th, 1746. It was attended by John Wesley, Charles Wesley, John Hodges, Jonathan Reeves, Thomas Maxfield, Thomas Westall, Thomas Willis, Samuel Taylor, and Thomas Glascot. The two latter were not present on Monday; they arrived on Tuesday morning.* The first question proposed on this occasion was, "Who are the properest persons to be present at any Conference of this nature? *A.* 1. As many of the preachers as conveniently can; 2. The most earnest and most sensible of the band leaders where the Conference is; and, 3. Any pious and judicious stranger, who may be occasionally in the place." †

* "Disciplinary Minutes." † *Ibid.*, p. 14.

Afterward, throughout the remainder of Monday and the whole of Tuesday, the Conference was occupied in a further examination into divers points of theology. The moral condition of man in his natural state, the nature of faith, justification, and other doctrines, were carefully reviewed. These discussions were highly interesting and important, and placed the essential truths of the Gospel in a clear and strong light, and carefully guarded them against error and abuse.

The call and qualification of laymen to the office of ministers, as Methodist preachers, were at this time also carefully considered and defined. As this is one of the most important parts of the Methodist economy, it seems desirable to give the judgment of this early Conference on the subject in its own words.

"*Q.* How shall we try those who think they are moved by the Holy Ghost, and called of God to preach? *A.* Inquire, 1. Do they know God as a pardoning God? Have they the love of God abiding in them? Do they desire and seek nothing but God? And are they holy in all manner of conversation? 2. Have they gifts (as well as grace) for the work? Have they (in some tolerable degree) a clear, sound understanding? Have they a right judgment in the things of God? Have they a just conception of salvation by faith? And has God given them any degree of utterance? Do they speak justly, readily, clearly? 3. Have they fruit? Are any truly convinced of sin, and converted to God, by their preaching? As long as these three marks concur in any, we believe he is called of God to preach. These we receive as a sufficient proof that he is moved thereto by the Holy Ghost.

"*Q.* But how shall we know whether they concur or not in any particular person? *A.* 1. If he is near us, we

will talk with him on the three preceding heads, and then hear him preach. 2. We will desire him to write down or relate the reasons why he thinks he is called of God thereto. 3. We will examine those who seem to have been convinced of sin, or converted to God, by his preaching. 4. If he is at a distance, we will desire the assistant to do this; and to inquire, What is the judgment of the Society in that place concerning him? *Q.* What method may we use in receiving a new helper? *A.* A proper time for doing this is at a Conference, after solemn fasting and prayer. We then receive him as a probationer, by giving him the Minutes of the Conference inscribed thus: 'To' A. B. 'You think it your duty to call sinners to repentance. Make full proof hereof, and we shall be glad to receive you as a fellow labourer. Observe, you are not to ramble up and down, but to go where the assistant directs, and there only.' Let him then read and carefully weigh what is contained therein, and see whether he can agree to it or not. If he can, let him come to the next Conference, when, after examination, fasting, and prayer, he may be received into full connexion with us, by giving him the Minutes inscribed thus: 'So long as you freely consent to, and earnestly endeavour to walk by, these rules, we shall rejoice to acknowledge you as a fellow labourer.'" * This form of admission was afterwards modified, and the term of probation extended. But in this manner the first race of Methodist preachers were selected and set apart for the ministry of the word.

Respecting the form of admitting a preacher, it was asked, "*Q.* Why do we not use more form and solemnity in the receiving a new labourer? *A.* We purposely decline it. 1. Because there is something of stateliness in it.

* Octavo "Minutes," p. 46.

2. Because we would not make haste. We desire barely to follow Providence, as it gradually opens." *

Many other questions were put and answered at this time, touching the special employment of a select number of assistants; the benefits that resulted to the assistants generally from keeping journals; the character in which they were to consider themselves; an outline plan for the guidance of their studies, and a list of books which they were advised to read; what should be regarded as a sufficient call to a new sphere of labour, &c., &c.

At this Conference, for the first time, we are informed of the number and geography of the several Circuits; but from the language employed it is plain that some such division of the country had been previously made. "*Q.* How are our Circuits now divided? *A.* Into seven:—

"1. London: which includes Surrey, Kent, Essex, Brentford, Egham, Windsor, Wycomb.

"2. Bristol: which includes Somersetshire, Portland, Wilts, Oxfordshire, Gloucestershire.

"3. Cornwall.

"4. Evesham: which includes Shrewsbury, Leominster, Hereford, and from Stroud to Wednesbury.

"5. Yorkshire: which includes Cheshire, Lancashire, Derbyshire, Nottinghamshire, Rutlandshire, and Lincolnshire.

"6. Newcastle.

"7. Wales."

It was then asked, "Who are our present assistants? *A.* Jonathan Reeves, John Bennett, John Houghton, John Nelson, James Wheatley, John Trembath, Thomas Westall, Thomas Richards, John Downes, Thomas Meyrick, Thomas Maxfield, Francis Walker." It was afterward decided that

* "Disciplinary Minutes," p. 16.

copies of the Minutes should only be given to those "who were, or might have been, present." *

Charles Wesley's journeys.

Almost immediately after this Conference, Charles Wesley proceeded on a tour of evangelical labour through the western counties. From Bristol he went to Publow, where, he says, "the wickedness of one, and the enthusiasm of another, have quite destroyed the work of God." Thence he went to Shepton Mallet, where he preached, and passed on to Portland. Here, he says, Friday, June 6th, "I preached to an houseful of staring, loving people, from Jer. l. 20. Some wept, but most looked quite unawakened. At noon and night I preached on an hill in the midst of the island. Most of the inhabitants came to hear; but few as yet feel the burden of sin, or the want of a Saviour." † On the Sunday following he preached again after the evening service, when some appeared to evince greater signs of emotion than had been before observed. On Monday he preached at Southwell in the morning, on the hill at noon, and at night at his lodgings. "Now," he says, "the power and the blessing came. My mouth and their hearts were opened. The rocks were broken in pieces, and melted into tears on every side. I continued exhorting them, from seven till ten, to save themselves from this untoward generation. We could hardly part. I left the little Society of twenty members confirmed and comforted." ‡ From Portland, he went on to Tavistock,

* "Disciplinary Minutes," p. 19.

† CHARLES WESLEY'S "Journal," vol. i., p. 416.

‡ *Ibid.* The 84th Hymn in the Wesleyan Hymn Book was composed on this occasion, beginning,—

"Come, O thou all-victorious Lord;
Thy power to us make known;
Strike with the hammer of Thy word,
And break these hearts of stone."

Plymouth, and Cornwall. At Gwennap, after an individual examination of the Society, he found that the violent persecutions they had endured had promoted their spiritual interests, and that they were in a prosperous state. In other parts of the county he was also greatly pleased at the godly experience of the people. At St. Just he examined a part of the Society in the evening, and made the following entry in his "Journal" the next day: "At four I talked with more of the Society, and adored the miracle of grace which has kept these sheep in the midst of wolves. Well may the despisers behold and wonder. Here is a bush in the fire, burning, yet not consumed! What have they not done to crush this rising sect? but lo! they prevail nothing! For one preacher they cut off, twenty spring up. Neither persuasions nor threatening, flattery nor violence, dungeons nor sufferings of various kinds, can conquer them. Many waters cannot quench this little spark which the Lord hath kindled, neither shall the floods of persecution drown it." *

Wesley's incessant labours.

Throughout this year, Wesley prosecuted the work of an evangelist and apostolic bishop with his usual diligence and success. In August he spent some time in Wales; he was in Cornwall in September; early in December he was about a week in Lewisham, writing scriptural lessons for children. When not actually engaged in travelling, he was mostly occupied at London or at Bristol, or in the vicinity of those cities, leading sinners to repentance, and building up believers in the faith of the Gospel. His steady and zealous attention to the character, conduct, and spiritual state of the individual members of his Societies is truly remarkable. In 1745, he examined the Society in London one by one, and wrote a list of the whole with his

* Charles Wesley's "Journal," vol. i., p. 423.

own hand, numbered from 1 to 2,008. In 1746, he repeated this operation, and wrote another list, in which the number was reduced to 1,939. In the course of this year, William Shent, who had for some time been engaged as a local preacher in Leeds, extended the sphere of his labours, and began to itinerate. His business, however, of hairdresser and barber was still carried on in Briggate as before; he having had two journeymen and two or three apprentices when he became a Methodist. This practice was at that time by no means uncommon. We have seen that John Nelson would work a week or two at his trade, even when travelling with Wesley, in order to provide for his support. And so, when Wesley sent Jacob Rowell to organize the Dales Circuit, the good man commenced by setting up a shop to afford him a maintenance.

Conference of 1747. Outline of the conversations.

The fourth Conference was held at the Foundery, London, and began on June 16th, 1747. There were present, John Wesley, Charles Wesley, Charles Manning, (vicar of Hayes,) Richard Thomas Bateman, (rector of St. Bartholomew the Great,) Henry Piers, Howel Harris, and Thomas Hardwick. It was then asked, "Which of our brethren shall we invite to be present at this Conference? *A.* John Jones, Thomas Maxfield, Jonathan Reeves, John Nelson, John Bennett, John Downes, Thomas Crouch, Robert Swindells, and John Maddern." * This was therefore by far the largest Conference which had yet been held. To the preceding names must be added that of Mr. Perronet, vicar of Shoreham, who arrived during the morning sitting.

The Conference thus constituted, the first inquiry was, "How may the time of this Conference be made more eminently a time of prayer, watching, and self-denial?"

* "Disciplinary Minutes," p. 20.

The reply charged on the mind of every member "to have an especial care to set God always before us," and, further, to employ the intervals of the sittings in visiting the sick, and in prayer. A regulation was then made, by which, on the opening of every Conference, the Minutes of the preceding one should be read. Scarcely any point was more carefully regarded by Wesley, in these early stages of Methodism, than the importance of clearly understanding and fully maintaining the right of private judgment. We accordingly find that, although the question had been previously asked and answered, it was again inquired, "How far does each of us agree to submit to the unanimous judgment of the rest? *A.* In speculative things each can only submit so far as his judgment shall be convinced. In every practical point, so far as we can without wounding our several consciences. *Q.* Can a Christian submit any farther than this, to any man, or number of men, upon earth? *A.* It is undeniably plain he cannot: either to pope, council, bishop, or convocation. And this is that grand principle of every man's right to private judgment, in opposition to implicit faith in man, on which Calvin, Luther, Melancthon, and all the ancient Reformers, at home and abroad, proceeded. Every man must think for himself; since every man must give an account for himself to God." *

The conversation then went on to explain the nature of schism as being a division in the Church regarded as the living body of Christ; and to prove that the promoters of Methodism were no more guilty of schism than of rebellion or murder, as they continued to hold the same communion with the Church which they ever did. But it was asked, "You profess to obey both the rules and the governors of the Church. Yet in many instances you do not obey them.

* "Disciplinary Minutes," pp. 20, 21.

How is this consistent? *A.* It is entirely consistent. We act at all times on one plain uniform principle. We will obey the rules and governors of the Church whenever we can, consistent with our duty to God. Whenever we cannot, we quietly obey God rather than man." Again, it was asked, "But why do you say, you are thrust out of the churches? Has not every minister a right to dispose of his own church? *A.* He ought to have, but, in fact, he has not. A minister desires I should preach in his church, but the bishop forbids him. That bishop then injures him, and thrusts me out of the church." *

The conversation proceeded to show that the term "*church*" in the New Testament means "a single congregation;" that a national Church is "a merely political institution;" that the three orders of bishops, priests, and deacons, generally obtained in the early ages of the Church; but that uniformity of Church government is not taught in Holy Scripture, and for the reason, that some variety in this respect may be necessary; and that uniformity was never attempted till the time of Constantine.†

One of these questions, with its answer, shall be given entire, to show Wesley's opinion, and that of his coadjutors, on one important feature of English ecclesiastical history. "*Q.* In what age was the divine right of episcopacy first asserted in England? *A.* About the middle of Queen Elizabeth's reign. Till then all bishops and clergy in England continually allowed and joined in the ministrations of those who were not episcopally ordained." ‡

An important conversation also took place this day on the nature of faith and assurance, and the extent to which the latter is the common privilege of Christian believers. On the following day (Wednesday) the subject of discourse

* "Disciplinary Minutes," p. 22. † *Ibid.*, p. 23. ‡ *Ibid.*

was, sanctification, its nature, perfection, and fruits. On Thursday it was asked, "Have we not limited field preaching too much? *A.* It seems we have." Several reasons were then assigned for continuing and extending the practice. Respect of persons, visiting the sick, the means of getting rid of unworthy members, and of purging the bands from all unfit persons, were then considered.

In answer to the inquiry, "Who are our present assistants?" we have the following list: "John Jones, Jonathan Reeves, John Houghton, Joseph Cownley, James Wheatley, John Nelson, John Trembath, Robert Swindells, Thomas Richards, Samuel Larwood, Thomas Westall, Francis Walker, John Bennett, Thomas Maxfield, John Downes, Richard Moss, Edward Dunstan, Thomas Meyrick, Richard Williamson, John Maddern, perhaps James Jones and Richard Webster." In addition to these there follows a list of thirty-eight persons who are said "to assist chiefly in one place."* The remainder of the conversation respected the behaviour of the assistants, their studies and work, with several advices for their guidance.

Travels and labours of the Wesleys. Conversion of Grimshaw.

Soon after this Conference Wesley went to Bristol and Kingswood, thence through Tavistock and Plymouth to Cornwall. Here he found the state of the Societies greatly altered. He says, "Tuesday, June 30th, we came to St. Ives before morning prayers, and walked to church without so much as one huzza. How strangely has one year altered the scene in Cornwall! This is now a peaceable, nay, honourable station. They give us good words almost in every place. What have we done, that the world should be civil to us?"† Even John Rogers, of Camborne, the

* "Disciplinary Minutes," pp. 24, 25.

† Wesley's "Works," vol. ii., p. 60

persevering and violent persecutor of the Methodists, gave up the case as hopeless, saying, "One may as well blow against the wind." Throughout the whole of West Cornwall, the Societies had peace. It was only at Port Isaac and Camelford that Wesley was at all molested during this tour. Soon afterward, he paid a short visit to Ireland, where there had been recently a very violent persecution. Immediately, as his brother came back from that island, Charles Wesley crossed the Channel, reached Dublin on September 9th, and continued preaching in that city, or travelling through the country, frequently exposed to great peril from the violence of infuriated mobs, until March, 1748; when, on the return of his brother to Dublin, he came to England.

Wesley pursued in the Irish capital the course he had adopted with so much success in England. He carefully inquired into the religious state of every member of the Society; and found, after this had been done, that instead of a large increase in its numbers, there was a great decrease. He continued in Ireland until May.

This year gave to Methodism the valuable auxiliary labours of the Rev. William Grimshaw,—a clergyman of Haworth, Yorkshire,—as an itinerant preacher. This pious and excellent minister was converted to God in 1742. He united himself to the Methodists in 1745. The following extracts from a letter, written by him to Wesley, dated "Ewood, August 20th, 1747," cast important light upon the views he entertained, and the course of labour he pursued at this period: "The method which the least and most unworthy of my Lord's ministers takes in his parish is this: I preach the Gospel glad tidings of salvation to penitent sinners, through faith in Christ's blood only, twice every Lord's day the year round, save

when I expound the Church Catechism and the Thirty-nine Articles, or read the Homilies, which in substance I think it my duty to do in some part of the year annually, on the Lord's day in the mornings. I have found the practice, I bless God, of inexpressible benefit to my congregation." Then, after speaking of his regular manner of visiting his parishioners, he adds, "But O, dear Sir, I know not what to say, I know not what to do. Sometimes I have made more excursions into the neighbouring parishes to exhort, but always with a Nicodemical fear, and to the great offence of the clergy, which, till lately, almost made me resolve to sally out no more, but content myself in my own bounds: till lately, I say; for on Wednesday was six weeks, from about five o'clock in the afternoon to about twelve at night, and again for some hours together, I may say, the day following, my mind was deeply affected with strong impressions to preach the Gospel abroad. The event I left to the Lord, fearing to be disobedient to what I trust was the heavenly call. The first thing suggested to my mind was to visit William Darney's Societies. I accordingly met one of them about a month ago. Last week I struck out into Lancashire and Cheshire, Mr. Bennett bearing me company."

After detailing his various routes, the state of the Societies, and the benefit he himself had derived from this additional labour, he proceeds, "I now in some measure begin to see the import of our Lord's design, by that deep impression upon my mind above mentioned: I am determined therefore to add, by the divine assistance, to the care of my own parish, that of so frequent visitation of Mr. Bennett's, William Darney's, the Leeds and Birstal Societies, as my own convenience will permit, and their circumstances may respectively seem to require; all along

eyeing the Lord's will and purposes for me. If I find the Lord's pleasure be that I must launch out further, I will obey; for He daily convinces me more and more of what He has graciously done, and will do, for my soul." After further expression of his obligations to God, and earnest desire to serve Him faithfully, he says, "What I purpose concerning the surveying the abovesaid Societies, as I have great cause to believe it is the Lord's will, so I question not but it will be agreeable to your conception of it. I desire to do nothing but in perfect harmony and concert with you, and therefore beg you will be entirely free, open, and communicative to me. I bless God I can discover no other at present but a very perfect agreement between your sentiments, principles, &c., of religion, and my own; and therefore desire you will, (as I do to you,) from time to time, lay before me such rules, places, proposals, &c., as you conceive most conducive to the welfare of the Church, the private benefit of her members, and in the whole to the glory of the Lord. My pulpit, I hope, shall be always at yours and your brother's service; and my house, so long as I have one, your welcome home. The same I'll make it to all your fellow-labourers, through the grace of God.....

"I am

"Your affectionate, but very unworthy, Brother in the Lord,

"WILLIAM GRIMSHAW."

His co-operation with Wesley.

The importance of Mr. Grimshaw's labours to the infant cause of Methodism, and the misrepresentations which have been put forth as to the origin and extent of his connexion with Wesley and his Societies, render the insertion of these copious extracts necessary. They show not only that he entertained the same religious views as Wesley, but that the connexion was not occasioned by any

application or urgency of the founder of Methodism, but arose entirely from Mr. Grimshaw's own religious convictions,—from his being "deeply affected with strong impressions to preach the Gospel abroad." Nor did this pious clergyman, in aiding the efforts of the Methodist preachers, introduce any innovations into the Methodist system, so far as it was at that time organized; or in any respect act as one not fully identified with it. On the contrary, so fully did he unite himself with Methodist interests, that the Circuit to which his labours extended, and which reached to Birstal and Leeds, was popularly called "Mr. Grimshaw's Circuit," and the preachers who were stationed there, "Mr. Grimshaw's preachers," because he officiated as the assistant (or superintendent) of that Circuit. He also visited the classes quarterly, and renewed the tickets; he attended and preached at the quarterly meetings, and held love-feasts in the Societies. He maintained the strictest intimacy with the preachers, entertained them at his house, had them to preach in his kitchen, himself giving notice of such services in hischurch, until he had built a chapel and dwelling-house for them, at his own expense.

A Methodist Society in Manchester.

A Society had been formed at this time in Manchester; but the origin of Methodism in that noble city was of a very humble character. The religious principles maintained by the band of godly young men at Oxford, were preached at Manchester at a very early date, by the Rev. Mr. Clayton, one of their number, who became minister of the old church. The first mention, however, of a Society in this city is in 1747, when it is said, in a letter from Mr. John Bennett to Wesley, that "some young men of Manchester (that spoke with Mr. Charles Wesley when he was with us last) have begun a Society, and took a room, and have subscribed their names in a letter to Mr.

Charles, desiring you will own them as brethren, and visit them in your return. They also desire any of us helpers in the Gospel may call on them. I have sent their letter to London. Dear Sir, do not forget us." * The number of these young men was certainly very small; for when Mr. Richard Barlow joined them, they were but fourteen or fifteen, and he was not one of the original members. Mr. Marsden, who had his information from Richard Barlow, says, "The place in which they had preaching, was a small room in a house near the river Irwell;" and Mr. Hopper calls it "a little garret by the river side." †

The fifth Conference, 1748, List of Circuits. Kingswood School.

There is no mention of the Conference of 1748 in the octavo edition of the "Minutes." But in the "Disciplinary Minutes" full particulars of it are found. It began, June 2nd, at the chapel in Tower Street, London; and there were present, John Wesley, Charles Wesley, William Felton, Charles Manning, Thomas Maxfield, John Jones, Thomas Meyrick, John Trembath, Edward Perronet, Jonathan Reeves, and afterwards Richard Thomas Bateman, John Green, and William Tucker.

The first question and answer marked out the course of its proceeding: "*Q.* What is our chief business at the present Conference? *A.* Not to consider points of doctrine; (the time will not permit;) but, 1. To review those parts of the former Conferences which relate to discipline; and, 2. To settle all things relating to the school which is now to be begun at Kingswood." ‡

The next question clearly indicates the pressure which had for some time been brought to bear upon Wesley by

* "Methodist Magazine for 1778," p. 472.

† EVERETT'S "Methodism in Manchester," p. 57.

‡ "Disciplinary Minutes," p. 27.

those who approved his doctrines, but dreaded the prospect of his raising a sect, which would ultimately separate from the Church: "*Q.* We are again pressed, 'only to preach in as many places as we can, but not to form any Societies:' shall we follow this advice? *A.* By no means. We have made the trial already. We have preached for more than a year, without forming Societies, in a large tract of land, from Newcastle to Berwick-upon-Tweed; and almost all the seed has fallen by the way-side. There is scarce any fruit of it remaining. *Q.* But what inconveniences do we observe, when people are not formed into Societies? *A.* These among many others: 1. The preacher cannot give proper exhortations and instructions to those who are convinced of sin, unless he has opportunities of meeting them apart from the mixed unawakened multitude. 2. They cannot watch over one another in love, unless they are thus united together. Nor, 3. Can the believers build up one another, and bear one another's burthens."

On Friday, Howel Harris, Samuel Larwood, James Jones, and William Shent being added, it was inquired, "*Q.* What can be done, in order to a closer union of our assistants with each other? *A.* 1. Let them be deeply convinced of the want there is at present, and of the absolute necessity of it. 2. Let them pray, that God would give them earnestly to desire it; and then that He would fulfil the desire He hath given."* "*Q.* What assistants do we agree to receive into the work? *A.* Charles Skelton, from Ireland, David Trathen and John Whitford, of Cornwall, Thomas Colbeck, William Darney, and E. C. Webster, of Yorkshire."

The Connexion was at this time divided into nine Circuits, thus:—

* "Disciplinary Minutes," p. 29.

"I.—London: including, 1. London itself. 2. Kent and Surrey. 3. Essex. 4. Brentford. 5. Windsor. 6. Wycomb. 7. Oxford. 8. Reading. 9. Blueberry. 10. Salisbury.

"II.—Bristol: including, 1. Bristol itself. 2. Kingswood. 3. Bath. 4. Bearfield. 5. The Devizes. 6. Road. 7. Coleford. 8. Oakhill. 9. Shepton Mallard. 10. Middlesey. 11. Beercrocombe. 12. Taunton. 13. Collompton.

"III.—Cornwall: including, 1. Tavistock. 2. Plymouth Dock. 3. Trewint. 4. St. Tue. 5. Gwennap. 6. St. Agnes. 7. Illogan, &c. 8. St. Ives. 9. The Western Societies.

"IV.—Ireland: including, 1. Dublin. 2. Tullamore. 3. Tyrrel's Pass. 4. Athlone.

"V.—Wales: including, 1. Cardiff. 2. Fonmon. 3. Lanmais, &c. 4. Lantriffent.

"VI.—Staffordshire: including, 1. Stroud. 2. Cirencester. 3. Stanley. 4. Evesham. 5. Wensbury. 6. Shrewsbury. 7. Leominster.

"VII.—Cheshire: including, 1. Cheshire itself. 2. Nottingham. 3. Derbyshire. 4. Lancashire. 5. Sheffield.

"VIII.—Yorkshire: including, 1. Leeds. 2. Birstal. 3. Keighley. 4. Acomb. 5. Syke-house. 6. Epworth. 7. Hainton. 8. Grimsby. 9. The Fens.

"IX.—Newcastle: including, 1. Osmotherley. 2. Newcastle itself. 3. Sunderland. 4. Biddick. 5. Burnupfield. 6. Spen. 7. Swalwell. 8. Horseley. 9. Plessey. 10. Berwick-upon-Tweed."

The other important business which devolved on this Conference had respect to the plan of operations to be carried on at the new school at Kingswood. There is much

obscurity connected with the early history of these schools. But we know that Wesley established one there for the children of the colliers in 1739. In the year 1741, he appointed Mr. John Cennick to superintend it and the Society there. When Cennick left, we have no information of the appointment of any person of ability to attend to the supervision of this establishment. But, before the Conference of this year, a larger house had been built, and at this time a plan of management had been arranged, and a system of teaching prepared. These were submitted to this Conference, and on the 24th of June, about three weeks after the close of this assembly, the schools were opened by Wesley, who preached on the occasion, from, "Train up a child in the way he should go," &c. At this time, the school was not limited to preachers' children, but open to such of the members as chose to send their children there. A plan for the government of this school (perhaps afterward modified and expanded) was published in 1768, and may now be found in Wesley's "Works."* The Hymns numbered 473, 474, and 475 in the Wesleyan collection, were composed for this opening service.

Notwithstanding the work continued thus deepening and widening under his hands, Wesley relaxed none of his personal efforts. Soon after the opening of the school at Kingswood, he went into the north, where he continued preaching and visiting the Societies, and occasionally encountered fierce opposition from brutal mobs,—especially in the neighbourhood of Colne, where Wesley and Mr. Grimshaw narrowly escaped with their lives,—until the end of September, when he returned to London, and remained there a fortnight examining the classes, and settling all Society business. He afterward went to Bristol, where he

* Wesley's "Works," vol. xiii., p. 270.

stayed only a few days, passed on through the western counties to Cornwall, and then returned by the beginning of October to Bristol. The winter he spent either at Bristol or London, and in preaching in the adjacent towns. Early in April, he set out for Ireland, passed through Wales, where he married his brother Charles to Miss Sarah Gwynne, and, proceeding on his journey, reached Dublin on Sunday, May 16th. Having preached on the Sabbath, he in the following week carefully examined the Societies, and was rejoiced to find that, in the face of violent opposition, they had increased from about 400 to 449. Wesley remained in Ireland until the middle of July, when he sailed from Dublin, and reached Bristol on the 24th. During this tour, he collected the depositions of the victims of the furious persecution raised by Butler the ballad-singer against the Methodists at Cork, which were laid before the grand jury of that city, who not only threw them all out, but at the same time made a presentment of infamous notoriety: "We find and present Charles Wesley to be a person of ill-fame, a vagabond, and a common disturber of His Majesty's peace; and we pray he may be transported." Similar presentments were made against Jonathan Reeves, and other preachers, and members of Society.

Rev. George White, of Colne. Society meeting at Todmorden.

Reference has been made to the danger to which Wesley and Grimshaw were exposed from the mob of Colne. This was perhaps the most systematic and carefully organized of all the outrages on law, order, and humanity, which the records of English history can supply. There can be no mistake as to its origin. As Wesley was proceeding from the north toward the south and west, the Rev. George White, minister of Colne, preached a sermon for the avowed purpose of stirring up the people against the Methodists. Not content with delivering this effusion

in his two churches, he published it. The following is the title-page under which it was sent forth to the world: "A SERMON AGAINST THE METHODISTS, preached at Colne and Marsden, in the County of Lancaster, *to a very numerous Audience,* at Colne, July 24th, and at Marsden, August 7th, 1748, by George White, M.A., Minister of Colne and Marsden, and Author of *Mercurius Latinus.* Published at the Request of the Audience," &c., &c. The text was 1 Cor. xiv. 33. The whole scope of the discourse justified the first line of the title; but some of its statements are as curious as they are malignant. The reverend preacher maintains that the Act of Toleration was "chiefly calculated for the further improvement of trade;" that the Methodist system "has a direct tendency to its ruin;" and asserts that it "never was the meaning of the legislature to tolerate these people." Mr. White concludes his sermon with an earnest entreaty that "this set of people might render obedience to the laws:" he then adds, that if entreaty is unavailing, "he will oppose, to the utmost" of his power, attempts "so unnatural and unjust." And he kept his word. When, from the progress of his journey, Wesley was speedily expected in the neighbourhood, a proclamation was issued to the following effect: "Notice is hereby given, that if any man be mindful to enlist into His Majesty's service, under the command of the Rev. George White, commander-in-chief, and John Banister, lieutenant-general of His Majesty's forces for the defence of the Church of England, and the support of the manufactory in and about Colne, both of which are now in danger, &c., let them now repair to the drum-head at the Cross, where each man shall have a pint of beer for advance, and other proper encouragement."* The mob thus raised and led,

* GRIMSHAW'S "Reply to White," p. 85.

not only brutally beat Wesley and Grimshaw, but cruelly ill-treated many of the Methodists, some of whom they threw from a rock twelve feet high into the river.

Yet, amid the most violent aggression from without, Methodism held on its way. Class-meetings were introduced into the most remote and newly visited parts. Leaders'-meetings were also held, and stewards properly appointed. A minute of one of these meetings, which was held near Todmorden early in this Methodistic year, has been preserved, and is as follows: "Oct. 18th, 1748.—At a meeting then held at Major Marshall's of the leaders of classes of several religious Societies, the following persons were chosen stewards: James Greenwood, John Parker, John Maden, and James Dyson." * It is observable here, that while there is no appellation given to the Societies, but the general term "religious," they are evidently regarded as in close union, indeed as parts of one body, as the appointment of stewards clearly proves.

Conference of 1749. Appointment of assistants; their duties.

The sixth Methodist Conference was held in London, and began on November 16th, 1749.† The Minutes of this Conference are preserved in a MS. appended to the tract which has been so often referred to as the "Disciplinary Minutes." From this source, which is regarded by the best judges as of undoubted authority, the following information is obtained.

The first question proposed was, "Can there be any such thing as a general union of our Societies throughout England?" The answer says, "A proposal for this was made above a year ago. The substance of this proposal

* "Methodism in Manchester," p. 95.

† The Octavo Minutes have, under this date, a long series of minutes; but these are incorrectly placed, being a summary made in 1763 of the minutes that were regarded as important from 1748 to that date.

was, to regard the Society in London as the mother Church; and for every assistant in country Circuits to inquire particularly into the state of his Circuit, and send such information to the stewards of the London Circuit, who would then, in case of need, settle a regular correspondence with all the Societies. It was also proposed, that a yearly collection should be established, out of which any pressing Society debts might be discharged, and any Society suffering persecution, or in real distress, might speedily be relieved." In this manner the necessity and utility of adopting and bringing into vigorous operation the connexional principle, appear to have been suggested to the mind of Wesley; and, contemplating its effects, he exultingly says, "Being thus united in one body, of which Christ Jesus is the Head, neither the world nor the devil will be able to separate us in time, or in eternity."

This measure led to the appointment of a superintendent preacher in each Circuit, under the name of "an assistant," which indicated that he specially assisted Wesley. The name frequently appears in the Minutes of preceding years; but it seems that the office was now more clearly defined, and invested with new and enlarged responsibilities; and this must certainly be regarded as an important step in Methodist organization. Having spoken of the importance of a union of all the Societies, and the proposal which had been made respecting it, the question was put, "How may we make some advances towards this? *A.* By appointing one of our helpers in each Circuit to take charge of the Societies therein. *Q.* By what name may such an helper be distinguished from the rest? *A.* He may be termed an 'assistant.' *Q.* How should an assistant be qualified for the charge? *A.* Not so much by superior gifts, as by walking closely with God."

The Circuits still continued nine in number, and the changes effected in them were few and unimportant. Salisbury was transferred from London to Bristol; and other alterations arising out of the extension of the cause were made. As the office of superintendent or assistant was now introduced, we give the names of those who were first appointed to this duty. In answer to the question, "Who may be assistants in these Circuits?" the answer was, "My brother or I may act as such in London; John Jones, in Bristol and Cornwall; John Haughton and Jonathan Reeves, in Ireland; —— Thomas, in Wales; James Jones, in Staffordshire; John Bennett, in Cheshire; William Shent, in Yorkshire; John Downes, in the Newcastle Circuit."

The following questions and answers show the views then entertained of the nature of this office, and the means taken to get its duties efficiently discharged. "*Q.* What is the office of an assistant? *A.* 1. To visit the classes in each place, and to write new lists of all the members of the Societies. 2. To regulate the bands. 3. To deliver new tickets. 4. To keep watch-nights and love-feasts monthly. 5. To take in or put out of the Society, or bands. 6. To hold Quarterly Meetings, and therein diligently to inquire into the spiritual and temporal state of each Society. 7. To watch over the helpers in his Circuit, and see that they behave well, and want nothing. 8. To take care that every Society be supplied with books, and that the money for them be returned quarterly. *Q.* How shall these be apprised of what is required of them? *A.* We will write to each immediately. *Q.* But some of them know not the nature of Quarterly Meetings. How shall we help them? *A.* Desire John Bennett, 1. To send up his plan. 2. To go himself, as soon as may be, to Newcastle and Wednes-

bury, and teach them the nature and method of these meetings. *Q.* What outward things shall the assistants immediately take care of? *A.* Let them immediately take care, 1. That every Society provide a private room for the helper. 2. Let every Society provide a set of books for the helper." Special directions for the assistants of London, Bristol, and Newcastle are then given, followed by earnest injunctions to the helpers to discharge their duties faithfully: the manner in which candidates for the office are to be received is afterward prescribed.

Quarterly Meetings at this time in Yorkshire.

From the above reference to John Bennett for the plan of conducting Quarterly Meetings, it appears that he at least had most carefully matured the mode of holding these essential convocations. And a corroborative proof of this is found in the fact, that it appears from the old book at Haworth, which was used for the accounts both of the Society and the Circuit, that quarterly meetings were held at this time in that Circuit; and from the language of a memorandum in the said book, which speaks of a certain thing to be "done at the next quarterly meeting held for the said Societies," it is evident, that they had become at this early period an established institution in that part of the country.* At this time, we are informed of that important feature of Methodist organization, a class paper. John Nelson, on the appointment of Mr. R. Cawley to be leader at Alpraham, "ruled a sheet of paper, inserted the names, and gave them to Mr. R. Cawley, whose name stood at the head of the list as the leader." †

During this year Wesley pursued his usual course of labour in preaching and visiting the Societies, and began the compilation of the "Christian Library," which extended to fifty volumes.

* "Methodism in Manchester," p. 116. † *Ibid.*, p. 179.

It is certain, however, that but little had been done towards making a suitable provision for the preachers. Mr. Christopher Hopper, when speaking of this year, says, "And now God raised up many preachers; men eminent both for gifts and graces. Some of them continue local, and some are itinerant preachers to this day. The latter end of the year 1749 I left the *Dales*, and the dear children God had given me. I rode to the *Smeals*, where I parted with my dear wife and friends with melting hearts and many tears. In those days we had no provision made for *preachers' wives*, no *funds*, no *stewards*. He that had a staff might take it, go without, or stay at home." *

The seventh Conference, 1750. Violent persecution in Ireland.

The seventh Conference was held in Bristol, March 8th, 1750. Of it no Minutes have been preserved; nor, indeed, of any but two from this time to the year 1765; after which they were regularly published. This Conference, occurring but four months after the preceding one, appears to have been small and unimportant. So much may be gathered from Wesley's statement. He says, "I desired all the preachers that were in Bristol to meet me at four in the afternoon, and so every day while I was in town." †

Immediately after this Conference, when Wesley had visited the Societies at Kingswood and Bristol, he set out through Wales for Ireland, where a fearful persecution was still raging. He reached Dublin on the 7th of April, and remained in Ireland until the latter part of July. Soon after his arrival, the famous presentment of the Cork grand jury previously noticed was brought before the assizes, and dismissed with honour to the persecuted preachers, and shame to their oppressors. But this did not terminate

* "Methodist Magazine," vol. iv., p. 90.

† "Journal," March 8th, 1750.

these disgraceful proceedings: the mayor of Cork not only refused to suppress any riotous conduct, but threatened Wesley in case he should preach abroad; and then disturbed and annoyed the congregation while quietly worshipping in their own house, and allowed, even if he did not order, the constables and the mob to ill-treat the preacher and congregation, on their leaving the preaching-house. Three or four days afterwards, the mob again assembled, assailed the houses of the Methodists, and denounced vengeance against any who should receive one of them into his dwelling.

In August this year, Wesley spent some weeks of very profitable ministry in Cornwall; on which occasion he remarks, "I rode to St. Just, where there is still the largest Society in Cornwall; and so great a proportion of believers I have not found in all the nation besides." Soon afterward, he observes, "We had a Quarterly Meeting; at which were present the stewards of all the Cornish Societies. We had now the first watch-night which had been in Cornwall; and 'great was the Holy One of Israel in the midst of us.'" *

Thomas Walsh begins to preach.

In the month of July, 1750, Thomas Walsh began to preach at Thornhill, about fifteen miles from Limerick. He was converted in his youth; and was about twenty years of age when he entered on this course of public duty. He was eminently pious and useful, preaching both in Irish and English. His knowledge of the Hebrew and Greek Scriptures, and the strength of his memory, were most extraordinary. Wesley says, "I never asked him the

* "Journal," August 22nd, 1750. A watch-night is a religious service, usually begun with a sermon in the evening, and continued by singing, exhortation, and prayer until just after midnight. They are now almost entirely confined to the last day of the year.

meaning of an Hebrew word, but he would immediately tell me how often it occurred in the Bible, and what it meant in each place." He was equally familiar with Greek. He laboured as a Methodist preacher about nine years.

The eighth Conference, 1751. Methodism in Scotland. Labours of John Bennett.

The eighth Conference was held at Bristol, and began on March 11th, 1751. No Minutes are preserved, nor have we any notice of it but what is found in Wesley's "Journal."

Although the depth and extent of the work of God had been all that the founder of Methodism could have hoped, yet he was much distressed at perceiving indications of serious difference of opinion among his preachers. And this pressed so heavily on him, that on this occasion he confesses to great depression of spirit, and anxious misgivings as to the stability of his coadjutors in the doctrines which they had been taught,—a most unusual thing with him. The following entry in his "Journal" expresses his state of feeling: "Saturday, 9th.—Many of our preachers came from various parts. My spirit was much bowed down among them, fearing some of them were perverted from the simplicity of the Gospel. But I was revived at the sight of John Haime and John Nelson, and those who came with them in the evening; knowing they held the truth as it is in Jesus, and did not hold it in unrighteousness. Monday, 11th.—Our Conference began; and the more we conversed, the more brotherly love increased. The same spirit we found on Tuesday and Wednesday. I expected to have heard many objections to our first doctrines; but none appeared to have any: we seemed to be all of one mind, as well as one heart." So his fears thus far appeared to be quite groundless.

Soon after this Conference, Wesley, accompanied by

Christopher Hopper, one of the first preachers, crossed the border, and introduced Methodism into Scotland; a measure to which he appears to have been specially urged by the abounding of Arianism and Socinianism in that country.

A second Conference was held this year at Leeds, on May 15th. Wesley took advantage of his return from Scotland to meet about thirty of the preachers in this town, when he "particularly inquired concerning their grace, gifts, and fruit, and found reason to doubt of one only."*

In the following month, he had again to exercise his authority, and to suspend, and ultimately expel, James Wheatley, one of his preachers. Following what has since become a sort of law in such cases, Wheatley so incessantly misrepresented the manner in which he had been treated, and so perseveringly vindicated his own conduct, that some other preachers were greatly unsettled, and had also to be removed from the Connexion. Nor was this the only or the greatest difficulty with which Wesley had at this time to struggle. It was soon found, that the evils he had apprehended at the Conference, were only delayed, and not averted. These, indeed, arose out of the course which the Wesleys pursued, and the class of mind to which they ministered. They went everywhere preaching repentance toward God, and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ; and requiring no other condition in those who joined them than a desire to flee from the wrath to come, and the manifestation of this desire by a consistent deportment. This course of action, as might have been expected, brought into the Methodist Societies persons of very different religious opinions and feelings. Some were strongly

* "Journal," under the date.

in favour of the Church; others had been bred among Dissenters, and, although brought to God by Methodist instrumentality, retained in a great measure their dislike to the national Establishment. Many, before their conversion, had a partiality for, or a dislike to, the doctrines of Calvinism; and although, under the influence of their awakening, this feeling was placed in abeyance, after their conversion their former partialities and antipathies revived; and, when any subject likely to excite them was brought into operation, the stability of such persons as Methodists became exceedingly doubtful.

The person who occasioned this dissension was John Bennett. After having laboured as a preacher very successfully in the north, he joined Wesley in 1747. He was an educated man, possessed respectable ministerial ability, was a very active and efficient preacher; and had been eminently useful in Derbyshire, Lancashire, and Cheshire. The following extract from one of his letters will give some idea of the work he performed about the year 1750. "Many doors," says he, "are opened for preaching in these parts, but cannot be supplied for want of preachers. My Circuit is one hundred and fifty miles in two weeks, during which time I preach publicly *thirty-four* times, besides meeting the Societies, and visiting the sick, &c." These extraordinary labours were attended with an uncommon blessing, and many were brought to God by his instrumentality. It is not known what Mr. Bennett views were prior to his conversion; but from the postscript of a letter which he wrote to Wesley in March, 1747, it appears that, under the influence of either early or recent inquiry, he had been brought into great perplexity on account of the Calvinistic controversy. He says, "I must

confess, that I lately looked on man as a mere *machine;* and whoever considers man as such, cannot possibly escape falling into the doctrines of *reprobation* and *election.* I looked upon man in this light from reading some authors; which has caused me many an uneasy hour. I wish all my young brethren may escape *this place of torment.* Unguarded expressions which we have used in our exhortations have given rise to the Calvinistic doctrine, as also to Antinomianism." Yet the man who thus wrote in 1747, on the 26th of December, 1752, under the influence of these very doctrines of reprobation and election, separated from Wesley's Connexion, and took with him a considerable part of the Society at Bolton-le-Moors, in Lancashire. He called Wesley a pope, charged him with preaching Popery, with denying the perseverance of the saints and justification by faith, making nothing of Christ, and teaching sinless perfection.* Wesley dismissed what was personal in this ungrateful attack by the Christian prayer, "Lord, lay not this sin to his charge!" and thus exhorted those whose peace had been perilled by this secession: "He has permitted a fiery trial to fall upon you; but I trust the sharpest part of it is past. May God enable you to stand fast together, in one mind and in one judgment! Watch over one another in love, and let not that which is lame be turned out of the way. Do all things without murmurings and disputings, following peace with all men; and the God of peace be with you!" †

First Quarterly Meeting in Cheshire.

A copy of the financial account of the first Quarterly Meeting of the Cheshire Circuit, (which then included Manchester,) dated "April 20th, 1752," has been preserved. It is as follows; the first column containing the names of the

* Atmore's "Memorials," p. 51.

† Wesley's "Works," vol. ii., p. 243; vol. xii., p. 249.

Societies; the second, those of the stewards who attended; and the third, the moneys brought:—

"A true Account of the Money brought in by the Stewards from each Society in the Manchester Round, for the Use of the Preachers, and for Discharging of necessary Expences.

		£.	s.	d.
Chester	Jonathan Pritchard ...	0	12	0
Alpraham	Richard Cawley	0	12	0
Acton	William Davison	0	7	0
Booth-Bank	John Cross	0	10	11
Oldfield-Brow ...	William Johnson.....	0	8	0
Davy-Hulme	Robert Heywood	0	15	0
Shakerley	John Hampson	0	4	0
Bolton	George Eskrick	0	8	2
Bank-House	James Schofield	0	8	0
Astbury.....	Jonathan Booth	0	5	6
Manchester	Richard Barlow	2	3	5
Kadbrook	Mary Webster	0	6	0
		£7	0	0"

This Circuit "or Round" included the counties of Lancaster, Chester, Derby, and Stafford, with part of Yorkshire. Mr. Marsden informs us, that the second Quarterly Meeting of this Circuit was held June 29th, 1752, and that his uncle attended it from Chelmorton in the Peak of Derbyshire, and took with him 5*s.*, as the contribution of that Society. The total amount then was £8. 2*s.* 11*d.*

Conference of 1752: improved arrangements for support of preachers.

The ninth Conference was held at Bristol, October 16th, 1752. At this time, a very important step was taken toward making a suitable provision for the wants of the itinerant ministers. No arrangement for their certain and

adequate support had previously existed. The stewards were expected to furnish what was necessary for defraying their travelling expenses; but beyond this, they were entitled to receive no money, and indeed were forbidden to take any.* The consequence was, that those ministers who were popular were generally well provided for, while the others were comparatively destitute. There is scarcely a more significant fact in the early history of the body, than what is here supplied. Those who were thus employed, were generally men of more than ordinary mind and energy, men who were adapted to take a prominent position from their force of character. Yet these persons are seen leaving their various occupations, placing themselves at Wesley's disposal, enduring untold labours and hardships, even exposing themselves to cruel persecutions; and all this is continued for several years, without a claim to any money whatever,—all they received coming in what appeared like charitable donations of food and clothing. If the first Methodist preachers were not influenced by an inward and mighty principle of real religion, their case is utterly unaccountable.

At this time, however, it was agreed that each preacher should receive £12. *per annum,* in order to provide himself with necessaries. But it was many years before this rule was generally observed. We are told that ten years afterward there was no such allowance in the York Circuit; that in 1764 the practice in the Norwich Circuit was to divide the love-feast collections between the preachers, which could give them but a very slender pittance; and it

* "Take no money of any. If they give you food when you are hungry, or clothing when you need them, it is good. But not silver or gold. Let there be no pretence to say, we grow rich by the Gospel."—"Disciplinary Minutes," p. 7.

is known that in 1765 a deputation was sent from York to the Conference at Manchester, to plead against the *large* sum of £12 a year being allowed to the preachers. This appeal, however, was overruled, and the usage at length became general.*

Conference of 1753. Minutes. Circuits.

The tenth Conference began at Leeds, May 22nd, 1753. Wesley thus speaks of it: "Most of our preachers met, and we conversed freely together, morning and afternoon, to the end of the week, when our Conference ended with the same blessing as it began; God giving us all to be not only of one heart, but of one judgment."† There were then present, John Wesley, William Grimshaw, John Milner, Samuel Larwood, John Haughton, Christopher Hopper, William Shent, John Edwards, William Hichens, John Fisher, Thomas Walsh, James Jones, John Nelson, Francis Walker, Joseph Jones, Thomas Michel, Nicholas Gilbert, John Hampson, Edward Perronet, Jonathan Maskew, Matthew Lowes, Jacob Rowel, John Haime, Jonathan Callow, William Fugill, John Turnough, James Schofield, Enoch Williams, itinerant preachers: Thomas Colbeck, John Lee, Titus Knight, Benjamin Branland, Joseph Bradley, John Johnson, Thomas Haton, Thomas Johnson, Francis Scott, William Alwood, John Thorpe, Matthew Watson, local preachers: and William Parker, J. Coats, William Greenwood, and John Greenwood.

On this occasion it was agreed that the future Conferences should be held "at London, Bristol, and Leeds, by turns." The following questions and answers then occur: "*Q.* What can be done to bear a sufficient testimony against the corruptions of the Germans? *A.* It might not be improper to reprint the letter to the church at Hernhut, with some addi-

* Myles, p. 63. † "Journal," under the date.

tions, and a dedication to the count. *Q.* Can we unite, if it be desirable, with Mr. Ingham? *A.* We may now behave to him with all tenderness and love, and unite with him when he returns to the old Methodist doctrine. *Q.* Predestinarian preachers have done much harm among us; how may this be prevented for the future? *A.* 1. Let none of them preach any more in our Societies. 2. Let a loving respectful letter be wrote to Mr. Whitefield, wherein he may be desired to advise his preachers not to reflect (as they have done continually, and that both with gross bitterness and rudeness) either upon the doctrines, or discipline, or person of Mr. Wesley, among his own Societies; to abstain himself (at least, when he is among Mr. Wesley's people) from speaking against either his doctrines, rules, or preachers; not to declare war anew, as he has done, by a needless digression in his late sermon. *Q.* Are any of our own preachers tainted with predestination? *A.* We know of none but John Broseworth, of Fishgate. *Q.* Does he do any hurt by his opinion? *A.* Very much. For he is continually cavilling with the preachers, and disputing with them. *Q.* What can be done to prevent this? *A.* 1. Let our preachers preach at his house no more. 2. Let him preach no more in any of our Societies. *Q.* Are none of our preachers tainted with Antinomianism? *A.* We hope not. *Q.* Shall we read over the Antinomian Dialogues? *A.* By all means, (which were read, as were Mr. Baxter's aphorisms concerning justification)." After some further consideration of the doctrine of justification this day's discussion closed.

Wednesday, May 23rd, the doctrine of sanctification was explained. The importance of preaching strongly and closely on inward and outward holiness was insisted on; and it was urged that more particular attention should be given to the inculcation of relative duties. Other theo-

logical subjects were explained, and various religious duties enforced; after which the privations of the preachers, and their duties with reference to the means of improvement, were discussed.

The following is a list of the Circuits and appointments of the preachers at this Conference :—

"1. London: John Wesley, &c.

"2. Bristol: William Hichens, John Haime, Paul Greenwood.

"3. Devonshire: William Roberts, Peter Jaco.

"4. Cornwall: John Fisher, Thomas Michel, John Turnough, John Fenwick.

"5. Staffordshire: James Jones, John Thorp.

"6. Cheshire: John Haughton, James Schofield.

"7 and 8. Yorkshire and Haworth: Jonathan Maskew, John Whitford, Enoch Williams, Joseph Jones, William Shent, John Edwards.

"9. Lincolnshire: William Fugill, Thomas Johnson, James Schofield.

"10. Newcastle: Christopher Hopper, John Hampson, Jonathan Callow, Jacob Rowel.

"11. Wales: Francis Walker, William Darney.

"12. Ireland: Joseph Cownley, Charles Skelton, Thomas Walsh, Samuel Larwood, James Deaves, Thomas Keade, Robert Swindells, James Morris, Nicholas Gilbert." *

During this year, while laid up with illness at Bath, Wesley began writing his "Notes on the New Testament."

* These Minutes are obtained from a MS. written down at the time by Jacob Rowel, one of the preachers present.

It will be observed that James Schofield is set down both for Cheshire and Lincolnshire. It is supposed that he was appointed to labour half the year in each Circuit,—an arrangement which was not uncommon at this period.

He was not able to preach for four months, during which time he finished the rough draft of the Notes on the Gospels, and began transcribing them.

Singular case of mental affliction.

About this time, the daughter of Mr. Jonathan Booth, of Woodseats, near Sheffield, was afflicted in a remarkable manner. Wesley's account of it is here given:—

"June 5th, 1753.—I rode over to Jonathan Booth's, at Woodseats, whose daughter had been ill in a very uncommon manner. The account her parents gave of it was as follows:—

"About the middle of December, 1752, Elizabeth Booth, junior, near ten years old, began to complain of a pain in her breast, which continued three days. On the fourth day, in a moment, without any provocation, she began to be in a vehement rage, reviling her mother, and throwing at the maid what came next to hand. This fit continued near an hour; then in an instant she was quite calm. The next morning she fell into a fit of another kind,—being stretched out, and stiff as a dead carcase: Thus she lay about an hour. In the afternoon she was suddenly seized with violent involuntary laughter; and she had some or other of these fits several times a day, for about a month. In the intervals of them she was in a great heaviness of soul, and continually crying for mercy; till one Saturday, as she lay stretched out on the bed, she broke out, 'I know that my Redeemer liveth.' Her faith and love increased from that time; but so did the violence of her fits also. And often while she was rejoicing and praising God, she would cry out, 'O Lord!' and, losing her senses at once, lie as dead, or laugh violently, or rave and blaspheme.

"In the middle of February, she grew more outrageous than ever. She frequently strove to throw herself into the fire, or out of the window. Often she attempted to tear

the Bible, cursing it in the bitterest manner; and many times she uttered oaths and blasphemies, too horrid to be repeated. Next to the Bible, her greatest rage was against the Methodists,—Mr. W. in particular. She frequently told us where he was, and what he was then doing; adding, 'He will be here soon;' and at another time, 'Now he is galloping down the lane, and two men with him.' In the intervals of her fits she was unusually stupid, and moped, as if void of common understanding; and yet sometimes broke out into vehement prayer, to the amazement of all that heard.

"Sometimes she would strip herself stark naked, and run up and down the house, screaming and crying, 'Save me! Save me! He will tear me in pieces.' At other times she cried out, 'He is tearing off my breasts; he is pouring melted lead down my throat. Now I suffer what the martyrs suffered; but I have not the martyrs' faith.'

"She frequently spoke as if she was another person, saying to her father, 'This girl is not thine, but mine. I have got possession of her, and I will keep her;' with many expressions of the same kind.

"She often seemed to be in a trance, and said she saw many visions; sometimes of heaven or hell, or judgment; sometimes of things which she said would shortly come to pass.

"In the beginning of March, Mrs. G. came over to Rotherham, who herself gave me the following account:—'Soon after I came in, she fell into a raging fit, blaspheming and cursing her father and me. She added, 'It was I that made Green's horse so bad the other day: (Which had been taken ill in a most unaccountable manner, as soon as he was put into the stable:) I did it that thou mightest have the preaching no more; and I had almost persuaded

thee to it. It was I that made thee bad last night.' I was then taken in an unusual way. All the time she spoke she was violently convulsed, and appeared to be in strong agony. After about a quarter of an hour she brake out into prayer, and then came to herself; only still dull and heavy.'

"John Thorpe, of Rotherham, had often a desire to pray for her in the congregation; but he was as often hindered, by a strong and sudden impression on his mind that she was dead. When he came to Woodseats, and began to mention what a desire he had had, the girl, being then in a raging fit, cried out, 'I have made a fool of Thorpe!' and burst out into a loud laughter.

"In the beginning of May all these symptoms ceased; and she continues in health both of soul and body." *

Wesley gives no opinion whatever on this strange case; but it is clear that he regarded it as not belonging to the ordinary range of natural disorders. And there are circumstances connected with it, which go strongly to confirm this impression. Jonathan Booth, the father, had been violently opposed to Wesley. This opposition had greatly increased just before this affliction of his daughter; so much so, that he rode forty miles to meet Wesley and request him to withdraw his preachers from Woodseats. The strange affliction commenced immediately afterwards, and continued above four months. He himself regarded it as a judgment from God on account of his interference, and recalled the preachers, and soon after became decidedly religious. Elizabeth was subsequently married to John Oliver, one of the preachers.

Wesley also about this time gives a singular relation of the preaching of one of his preachers in his sleep :—

* Wesley's "Journal," vol. ii., pp. 280, 281.

"On Friday, May 25th, about one in the morning, being then fast asleep, he began to speak. There were present, in two or three minutes, William, Mary, and Amelia Shent, John Haime, John Hampson, Joseph Jones, Thomas Mitchell, and Ann Foghill.

"He first exhorted the congregation to 'sing with the spirit and the understanding also,' and gave them directions how to do it. He then gave out that hymn, line by line,—

'Come, Holy Spirit, heavenly Dove,
With all Thy quick'ning powers;'

pitching the tune, and singing it to the end. He added an exhortation to take heed how they heard: then he named his text, 1 John v. 19, 'We know that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in wickedness.' He divided his discourse into six parts; undertaking to show, 1. That all true believers are of God: 2. That they *know* they are of God: 3. That the world lieth in wickedness: 4. That every individual who is of the world, is in this condition: 5. The dreadful end of such: He, 6, closed with an exhortation to those who were of God, and those who were of the world.

"After he had gone through two or three heads, he broke off, and began to speak to a clergyman, who came in and interrupted him. He disputed with him for some time, leaving him space to propose his objections, and then answering them one by one. Afterwards he desired the congregation, now the disturber was gone, to return thanks to God; and so gave out and sung,—

'Praise God, from whom pure blessings flow!'

"When he had done preaching, he desired the Society to meet: to whom he first gave out an hymn, as before, and then exhorted them to love one another: 1. Because they had one Creator, Preserver, and Father; 2. Because they had all one Redeemer; 3. Because they had all one Sanc-

Janu. 29. 1752

It is agreed by us whose names are underwritten

1. That if we ~~hear any Ill of each other~~, we will not listen, or willingly inquire after any Ill concerning each other:

2. That if we do hear any Ill of each other, we will not be forward to believe it:

3. That as soon as possible we will communicate what we hear, by speaking or writing to the Person concerned:

4. That till we have done this, we will not write or speak a Syllable of it to any other Person whatsoever:

5. That neither will we mention it, after we have done this, to any other Person:

6. That we will not make any Exception to any of these Rules, unless we think ourselves absolutely obliged in Conscience so to do.

John Jones
John Nelson
Willm Shent
John Haime

John Wesley
Charles Wesley
John: Trembath.
Perronet
Jon.ᵗʰ Reeves
Jo.ˢ Cownley
Perronet
Tho. Maxfield.
J Downes.

tifier; 4. Because they were walking in one way of holiness; and, 5. Because they were all going to one heaven.

"Having sung a parting verse, he said, (as shaking each by the hand,) 'Good night, brother; good night, sister.' This lasted till about a quarter after two, he being fast asleep all the time. In the morning he knew nothing of all this; having, as he apprehended, slept from night to morning, without dreaming at all."—"By what principles of philosophy can we account for this?" *

Conference of 1754. Secession of Jonathan Reeves and other preachers.

On May 22nd, 1754, the eleventh Conference began at London. Wesley says respecting it, "The spirit of peace and love was in the midst of us. Before we parted, we all willingly signed an agreement not to act independently of each other; so that the breach lately made has only united us more closely than ever."

This was the second declaration signed by Methodist preachers. The first was drawn up on January 29th, 1752, and subscribed by the Wesleys, Jonathan Reeves, and ten others.† The same thing has been done since on many occasions, when the circumstances of the Connexion have required it; and often with the happiest effects. The breach above referred to was the secession from the body of five of the most eminent preachers,—Jonathan Reeves, Samuel Larwood, John Whitworth, Charles Skelton, and John Edwards. It does not appear that the cause of their retirement was any disagreement with Wesley on doctrinal or disciplinary measures; it was more probably the very defective provision then made for the families of preachers. Nor do they seem to have acted in concert. Jonathan

* Wesley's "Journal," vol. ii., p. 279.

† A *fac-simile* of the original document is given in Jackson's "Life of Charles Wesley," vol. ii., p. 576.

Reeves obtained episcopal ordination, became minister of Magdalen Hospital, and afterward curate of Whitechapel church. Samuel Larwood settled as an Independent minister in Southwark. John Edwards became pastor of an Independent church at Leeds, and Whitworth and Skelton became Independent ministers in other places.

Mr. John Edwards appears to have applied to Wesley at, or previous to, the Conference of 1753, for something like a permanent appointment at Leeds; for, in the Minutes of that year, the following question and answer occur: "*Q.* Is it expected that John Edwards should settle at Leeds? *A.* We can in no wise consent to his staying there always; but neither him nor us have any objection to his spending half a year in Leeds, the same as any other travelling preacher; and he may make a trial, for the two or three months, as joint assistant with William Shent." This is one of the first, if not the very first time, that the Conference is found dealing with a preacher's appointment; but it is evident that, in this case, Wesley brought before the preachers the urgent request which had been made to him, and had their concurrence in refusing to comply with it. When, however, in pursuance of this arrangement, the time arrived for Edwards to leave Leeds, he refused to do so, and not only held the preacher's house in defiance of the Conference and of the trustees, but also, because there was a private entrance from the house to the chapel, he claimed a right over the latter, and closed it, so that for some time there was no week-night service. Meanwhile his friends were proceeding to build a new chapel, in which he meant to begin a stated ministry in the town. The trustees, however, found means of ejecting him from the premises; and, on the day that he opened his chapel, they got Mr. Whitefield, who was in that part of the country,

to preach in front of the Methodist chapel. This aid in some measure saved the Society; but Mr. Edwards, notwithstanding, took away a large portion of the members, and by this means laid the foundation of the Independent interest in the town of Leeds. On this case Mr. Whitefield observed, "But O how hath my pleasure been alloyed at Leeds! I rejoiced with trembling; for, unknown to me, they had almost finished a large house, in order to form a separate congregation. If this scheme succeeds, an awful separation, I fear, will take place amongst the Societies. I have written to Mr. Wesley, and done all I could to prevent it. O this self-love, this self-will! It is the devil of devils! Lord Jesus, may Thy blessed Spirit purge it out of all our hearts!" This strong language of Whitefield has been fully justified with reference to many secessions from Methodism, besides that now under consideration.

The twelfth Conference began at Leeds, May 6th, 1755. By this time the increase of the Methodist Societies, the number of the preachers, and the manner in which both were persecuted by the clergy, and repelled from the communion of the Established Church in many places, pressed on the attention of the people serious questions as to the propriety of endeavouring to continue the Societies in professed union with the national Church. In some places, (at Newcastle, for instance,) many were on the point of leaving the Church, and some had even already done so; and, as they believed, on Wesley's authority; although certainly by mistaking his conduct and advice. He therefore, on the opening of this Conference, raised the question, "Whether we ought to separate from the Church?" In his "Journal," he has given the result of this discussion, thus: "Whatever was advanced on the

The twelfth Conference, 1755.

one side or the other, was seriously and calmly considered; and on the third day we were all fully agreed in that general conclusion, that (whether it was lawful or not) it was no ways expedient."

The Minutes of this Conference.

This same conclusion is also found in a MS. copy of the Minutes of this Conference, which is appended to the "Disciplinary Minutes." In that document it stands thus: "*Q.* Ought we to separate from the Established Church? After a free and full debate continued for several days, it was agreed by all, that we ought not."

In this copy of the Minutes, we have the second list of the stations of the preachers which is extant. It is as follows:—

"London: Jno. Murlin, T. Hanby, Thos. Olivers, Enoch Williams.

"Bristol: W. Hichins, P. Jaco, Rd. Lucas, J. Furz.

"Cornwall: Rich. Gilbert, Paul Greenwood, T. Tobias, Henry Floyd.

"Staffordshire: Jas. Jones, Jno. Johnson, Jno. Hocking.

"Cheshire: R. Moss, Jacob Rowel.

"Haworth: W. Grimshaw, Jno. Nelson, Jas. Schofield.

"Leeds: Jno. Fenwick, Thos. Lee, Thos. Johnson, W. Shent.

"Lincolnshire: Jno. Maskew, T. Mitchell.

"Newcastle: C. Hopper, Jas. Massiott, Matth. Lowes, Jno. Wild, Jno. Turnough.

"Wales: Jno. Brown, Jno. Wesley.

"Ireland: T. Walsh, Jas. Deaves, T. Seccombe, Rob. Swindells, Jos. Cownley, T. Kead, James Oddy, Jno. Fisher, Jos. Tucker."

These Minutes state that sixty-three preachers were present at this Conference; but these were not all itinerants. The lists of preachers now given are characterized

by a very curious peculiarity. They are three in number. The first is a list of thirty-four names, beginning with John Wesley and Charles Wesley, headed, "Our present itinerants are." The second is a list of twelve names, headed, "Half-itinerants." The third contains fourteen names, who are called, "Our chief local preachers." These half-itinerants were unquestionably men who gave themselves up to travel under Wesley's direction, without relinquishing their trade or business; similar, indeed, to William Shent, whose name stands at the head of the list, and who, although he travelled several years, never gave up his barber's shop, but left it under the care of journeymen and apprentices, while he went over the country, preaching the Gospel. At length, when he found that, in consequence of his absence, the business was seriously falling off, he returned to it. At the close of these Minutes, there is an address, which Wesley delivered to the preachers before they separated. It is full of pointed heart-searching questions, intended to impress them with the great importance of a close walk with God, and a diligent and zealous discharge of their ministerial duties.

The renewal of the covenant introduced.

Always watchful to promote the spiritual prosperity of his people, Wesley, in August, 1755, introduced into his Societies the practice of renewing the covenant, now generally observed in all the larger places on the first Sabbath of every year. On this occasion, he says, "August 6th.—I mentioned to the congregation another means of increasing spiritual religion, which had been frequently practised by our forefathers, and attended with eminent blessing, namely, the joining in a covenant to serve God with all our heart, and with all our soul." He explained this to the Society several successive mornings, that a matter so serious and important might be fully understood

by all. On the Friday, he and several of the members devoted themselves to fasting and prayer, that they might obtain from the Lord wisdom and strength to enable them to promise unto God, and to keep it. On the following Monday, he further explained the nature of this covenant service in the French church at Spitalfields, and read the form of covenant written by the eminent Joseph Alleine, and published in one of the treatises of Richard Alleine, who was his uncle and father-in-law. After this form of words was read, all who in their heart were desirous of thus covenanting to serve God were invited to stand up, when about eighteen hundred people stood on their feet. "Such a sight," says Wesley, "I never saw before; surely the fruit of it shall remain for ever."

After the expulsion of James Wheatley for immorality in 1754, Wesley and his brother appear to have entertained some doubts respecting the general character of the preachers; and Charles Wesley, anxious to urge on them the duty and importance of a steady adherence to the Church, undertook the task of making particular inquiry respecting each of them throughout the Connexion; he being, as Mr. Watson observes, "perhaps more confident in his own discernment of character, and less influenced by affection for the preachers. The result was, however, highly creditable to them, for no irregularity of character was detected; but as the visitation was not conducted, to say the least of it, in the bland manner in which it would have been executed by John Wesley, who was, indeed, alone regarded as the father of the Connexion, it led, as might be expected, to bickerings. Many of the preachers did not come up to Charles Wesley's notions of attachment to the Church; some began to wish a little larger share in the government; and a few did not rise to his standard of

ministerial abilities, although of this he judged only by report. From this time a stronger feeling of disunion between the preachers and him grew up, which ultimately led to his taking a much less active part in the affairs of the body, except to interfere occasionally with his advice; and, in still later years, now and then to censure the increasing irregularity of his brother's proceedings." * The difference between the two Wesleys on this subject appears to have been just this:—With Charles, adherence to the Church was paramount; everything else was of secondary importance. With John the grand ruling idea was the salvation of sinners; and although anxious to remain in union with the Church, and to keep his Societies from separating from it, he subjected everything to the proclamation of the Gospel and the salvation of men. "Church or no Church," he observes in one of his letters to Charles, "we must attend to the work of saving souls." Charles, with a view to further his object in keeping his brother and the Societies in union with the Church, got him to sign an agreement, that no preacher should be employed but by their mutual consent; but when Wesley found that this was being used to limit the number of preachers, to the damage of the work of God, he set it aside, as contrary to the fundamental principle to which both had pledged themselves at the Conference of 1744, namely, "We do and will do all we can, to prevent those consequences which are supposed likely to happen after our death. But we cannot with a good conscience neglect the present opportunity of saving souls while we live, for fear of consequences which may possibly or probably happen after we are dead." †

* Watson's "Life of Wesley," Works, vol. v., p. 198.

† Octavo "Minutes," p. 9.

Conference of 1756. Its proceedings. Reasons against a separation from the Church. Charles Wesley on the subject.

The thirteenth Conference was held at Bristol, and began August 26th, 1756. Wesley's account of it is as follows: "About fifty of us being met, the Rules of the Society were read over, and carefully considered one by one: but we did not find any that could be spared. So we all agreed to abide by them all, and to recommend them with all our might. We then largely considered the necessity of keeping in the Church, and using the clergy with tenderness; and there was no dissenting voice. God gave us all to be of one mind and one judgment. The Rules of the Bands were read over and considered, one by one; which, after some verbal alterations, we all agreed to observe and enforce. The Rules of Kingswood School were read and considered, one by one; and we were all convinced they were agreeable to Scripture and reason; in consequence of which it was agreed,—1. That a short account of the design and present state of the school be read by every Assistant in every Society: and, 2. That a subscription for it be begun in every place, and (if need be) a collection made every year. My brother and I closed the Conference by a solemn declaration of our purpose never to separate from the Church, and all our brethren concurred therein." *

Mr. Myles believes that on this occasion Wesley wrote the "Twelve Reasons against a Separation from the Church of England," which are published in his "Works;" † and that the date 1758 prefixed to the paper marks the time of its publication, with the adhesion of Charles Wesley appended to it. Not that he objected to the reasons for not separating; in these he fully concurred: but he did not concur in the assumed lawfulness of such a separation. Indeed, he seems to have felt extremely grieved, as already

* "Journal" under the date.

† Vol. xiii., p. 213.

intimated, at the opinions which many of the preachers entertained on this subject, and that it should have been mooted under any circumstances. His subscription is attached to the following paragraph, which is appended to the "Reasons."

"I THINK myself bound to add my testimony to my brother's. His twelve reasons against our ever separating from the Church of England are mine also. I subscribe to them with all my heart. Only, with regard to the first, I am quite clear that it is neither expedient nor lawful for me to separate; and I never had the least inclination or temptation so to do. My affection for the Church is as strong as ever; and I clearly see my calling; which is to live and die in her communion. This, therefore, I am determined to do, the Lord being my Helper.

"I have subjoined the Hymns for the Lay-Preachers; still further to secure this end, to cut off all jealousy and suspicion from our friends, and hope from our enemies, of our having any design of ever separating from the Church. I have no secret reserve, or distant thought of it. I never had. Would to God all the Methodist preachers were, in this respect, like-minded with

"CHARLES WESLEY."

This year gave Wesley the aid and co-operation of the excellent John Fletcher, afterwards vicar of Madeley. This man of God was a native of Nyon in Switzerland. He became acquainted with Wesley soon after his arrival in England, in 1752; was made a happy partaker of pardoning mercy, in 1755; was ordained a minister of the Church of England in the Chapel Royal, St. James's, by the Bishop of Bangor, on March 6th, 1757; and imme-

diately afterwards hastened to the Foundery, and assisted Wesley (who was very unwell at the time) to administer the Lord's Supper to the Society; and ever afterwards conducted himself towards him as a very faithful and devoted friend.

In Wesley's "Journal" this entry is found: "Saturday, May 21.—I had a little Conference with our preachers." But this did not prevent the regular meeting in August.

The brevity which our limits impose, by confining our narration to prominent facts, may lead to the opinion that as Methodism had now acquired numbers and influence, it had become popular and generally diffused. On the contrary, it had only obtained a position at certain points in the country, beyond which the masses of the population were as ignorant and as irreligious as before. An illustration of this may be seen in the vast extent of the Circuits, two or three preachers having frequently to spread their labours over several counties. Such cases as the following were by no means rare, although many cannot be recorded. During 1756, John Nelson or Peter Jaco went to the village of Ossett, near Leeds, and, there meeting with a farmer named John Phillips, began to talk with him on the subject of religion. He sternly replied, "Do you think I have my religion to seek now? I have that religion which served my forefathers, and it shall serve me. I should think it no more sin to take a scythe, and cut off the legs of all the Methodist preachers, than I should to mow down so many noxious weeds." This reply was received with so much kindness on the part of the preacher, that the mind of Phillips was very sensibly affected. He was soon after induced to hear the Methodists for himself, and was brought to a saving acquaintance with Christ. He then invited the preachers to his house, some of the worst

characters in the village were converted, and Methodism was permanently established there.

Conference of 1757. Mr. Mather sent out to travel as a married man. Methodism in Darlington.

The fourteenth Conference was held in London, August 4th, 1757. Mr. Wesley simply says of it, that in it, "from the first hour to the last, there was no jarring string, but all was love." Immediately after this Conference, Mr. Alexander Mather was received as an itinerant preacher. He was the first married man for whom any regular provision was made. His eminent ability had before pointed him out for the work, but the difficulty lay in securing a provision for his wife. He was asked what would be sufficient, and replied, "Four shillings a week." This the stewards were unwilling to allow; so he remained at his business. Now, however, the stipend named above was promised; and Mr. Mather proceeded to his Circuit at Epworth on foot, walking one hundred and fifty miles.* This was another step toward settling the financial economy of the Connexion. Slender as the pittance allowed was, it was preferable to the precarious donations of the stewards. This measure was the beginning of the settlement for preachers' wives, and Mrs. Mather was the first preacher's wife to whom any fixed sum was paid.

The introduction of Methodism into Darlington may be here very properly noticed with more than usual detail, inasmuch as it not only contains many of the prominent features which usually attend the extension of the work of God into new districts, but also exhibits the early history of a person who afterwards obtained extensive notoriety in the religious world.

"There lived at a place called Bellingham, near Stockton, a farmer of the name of Unthank, whose sister resolved to go and hear the Methodists. Her family highly dis-

* "Arminian Magazine," vol. iii., p. 149.

approved of this resolve; and she engaged her brother to go and bring his report of the sermon. He did so, and it would seem he was rather confounded than convinced. He resolved to go again, and on this occasion he was deeply convinced of sin, and eventually converted to God. Other members of the family were soon made 'partakers of like precious faith;' and, after severe exercises of mind, he, on the advice of Mr. Wesley and others, became a useful and acceptable local preacher.

John MacGowan.

"There lived at a place called Norton a John MacGowan, whose history must be briefly detailed. He was one of two sons of a prosperous baker in the city of Edinburgh; and John was intended for a minister in the Church of Scotland, and his brother for the bar. They were put to be educated accordingly. But John's principles were awfully at variance with the purposes of his father: by a course of prodigality he soon reduced himself to wretchedness; and, asking money of his mother under pretence of visiting a relative, he left his home, never more to return. He soon exhausted his resources,—for he was a gambler and a spendthrift,—and, this being just when the Pretender was invading Scotland, he joined the rebel army, and fought at the battle of Culloden. The loss of this battle reduced him to great extremities; but, as he had fought in coloured clothes, he could soon disencumber himself of the evidences of his participation in the rebellion. He threw away his arms and belts, and prepared to fly. In order to provide for his present wants, he plundered the slain of their money and valuables. To hide himself from apprehension, he crossed the border, and came to Durham; and to provide for his future wants, he put himself apprentice to a linen-weaver. When he had served his apprenticeship, he went to Norton to work as a journeyman. This brought him into contact with Mr. Unthank.

They met one Sunday, as each was going to Stockton to attend his place of worship; and as Mr. Unthank said he never dined on the Lord's day, in order that he might attend both services, it was agreed that they should accompany each other to their respective places of worship. On the way MacGowan was surprised at the knowledge and experience of his new friend, and asked him where he had obtained the views which had led to results so truly enviable; and on being informed, 'Amongst the Methodists,' he pronounced this to be impossible: for they were, he said, a very ignorant people. But on hearing for himself, on his return home he declared his astonishment at the extensive knowledge of the preacher, and his ardent desire to go again on the first opportunity. This he did; was deeply humbled on account of his sin, sought and found mercy, joined the Society, and eventually became an excellent local preacher. They now were true yoke-fellows, and yearned for the extension of the Gospel, which they had thus received in the love thereof.

"They had heard of Darlington having been once visited by a passing Methodist preacher, and of a widow lady of the name of Hosmer, formerly a Moravian in the county of Kent, who had removed to Darlington with a daughter and a son, who was there apprenticed to be a chemist. On Whit-Tuesday, therefore, in the year 1753, they resolved to visit Darlington; and having heard that Mrs. Hosmer was wishful to introduce Methodism, they 'sought her out and found her.' While there, her son, a very gay youth, came into the house with a ticket for the theatre, to dress for the occasion. But he was drawn into conversation, and eventually into controversy, with Messrs. Unthank and MacGowan. The latter, though he had gained experimental godliness amongst the Methodists, held to his Cal-

vinistic opinions, as a Scotch Presbyterian; but, though an able man and a thorough polemic, he was foiled in argument by this gay and giddy youth. Mr. Unthank avowed opposite sentiments, of which the youth approved; but he thought him needlessly strict in pressing their personal and experimental application. The visitors had resolved on holding a meeting in the evening, and it was decided that Mr. Unthank should preach. Mrs. Hosmer procured a room in the house of Mr. Oswald, a currier, in Clay Row; and her daughter pressed young Hosmer to attend; but he pleaded his intention to attend the theatre, and set off for that purpose. On the way, however, he relented; tore up his ticket in the street; and went to the house where the preaching was to be. His pride would not let him sit in the same room, but he went into an adjoining one, and locked himself in. He could hear the sermon, and it proved to him 'the savour of life unto life.' When Messrs. Unthank and MacGowan found him, he was bathed in tears of penitence, and they joined in prayer for his salvation. Whether he then obtained mercy, is not known; but the whole family joined in entreaties that the preachers would visit them again the next week, which they did; and, after preaching, they formed those into a class who had been brought to a decision. Of this class Mr. Unthank became the leader; and he and his friend MacGowan came in company from near Stockton, to meet it every other week; and on the alternate week they wrote and sent an address to be read in the class, as a substitute for their personal attendance. This was the introduction of Methodism into Darlington; and this was the class which, until it was augmented by a revival in the year 1776, consisted only of nine members, but by this was increased to seventy.

"It will be interesting, as far as we can, to follow these

parties. The family of Mr. and Mrs. Moore continued faithful; and some of the most interesting entries in Mr. Wesley's 'Journal' refer to his visits to Potto. Several of Mrs. Moore's letters exist in the fourth volume of the 'Arminian Magazine;' and show her to have been a lady of a truly intelligent mind and devout spirit. One of her descendants at least still survives, and is now one of the Circuit stewards of the Stokesley Circuit.

"Mr. Unthank held on his way, and was an eminently holy and useful man; and 'after he had served his generation by the will of God, he fell asleep,' in the year 1822, in the ninety-third year of his age. An excellent grandson survives, who was for many years a local preacher in this circuit, but now resides in Middlesborough. To him we are indebted for this part of our narrative, which he often heard his grandfather repeat.

"MacGowan, being a Calvinist, could scarcely be expected to keep his standing amongst Mr. Wesley's teachers, and finally he was reluctantly expelled. At this he was greatly distressed; but he engaged as pastor to a small Baptist congregation at Bridgenorth in Shropshire; and he subsequently removed to London, where he was very popular both as a preacher and an author. Indeed, this was no other than the author of ['The Dialogues of Devils,' and of] the celebrated 'Satyrical Sermon' called 'The Shaver.'"*

Conference of 1758. Organization of the Society at Norwich.

The fifteenth Conference was held at Bristol, on the 10th of August, 1758. Wesley simply says of it, "It began and ended in perfect harmony."

During the year, Wesley prosecuted his course of labour with the diligence and devoted zeal which marked

* "Wesleyan Methodism in the Darlington Circuit. By the Rev. George Jackson," p. 17.

his whole life. The following record will show the arduous toil he endured, and at the same time the minute attention he paid even to his small country Societies.

"Saturday, March 3rd.—We had a mild, delightful day, and a pleasant ride to Colchester. In the evening, and on Sunday morning, the house contained the congregation tolerably well; but in the afternoon I was obliged to go out; and I suppose we had on St. John's Green five or six times as many as the house would contain. Such is the advantage of field preaching. After examining the Society, I found that, out of the one hundred and twenty-six members I had left in October, we had lost only twelve; in the place of whom we have gained forty: and many of those whom we left in sorrow and heaviness, are now rejoicing in God their Saviour."

About this time he went to Norwich, and re-organized the Society there, which had, indeed, passed through extraordinary scenes. "Soon after the expulsion of James Wheatley for immorality in 1751, as previously noticed, he appears to have repented and returned to God, and commenced preaching in the city of Norwich. He was there exposed to a long continued series of frightful and cruel persecutions. His life was frequently in danger from furious mobs, and he was often dragged by the hair of his head through the streets of the city! All these grievous sufferings he bore with the meekness of a lamb, and the fortitude and patience of an apostle. His preaching was attended with divine power; and many of the most profligate and abandoned characters in the city became reformed. He was instrumental in gathering a considerable Society." * This success furnished him with means, and he accordingly built one of the largest chapels in the city,

* Atmore's "Memorial."

and called it "The Tabernacle." The congregations which attended his ministry were uncommonly large, and he was almost adored by the people. But he again fell into sin, and his Societies were scattered. In April, 1759, Wesley obtained a lease of the Tabernacle, and, gathering together the wreck of Wheatley's Societies, united them with his own, dividing them into classes, when he found that the aggregate number of members was above five hundred and seventy.

Conference of 1759. Great revival of religion at Everton.

The sixteenth Conference was held in London, and began August 8th, 1759. Of it Wesley says, "The time was almost entirely employed in examining whether the spirit and lives of our preachers were suitable to their profession." This examination into the characters of the preachers has ever since constituted one of the most important parts of the duty of every Conference. By this means inquiry may be made to clear up any doubt when no direct charge is brought. In the event of any fault or criminality being discovered, one of the following punishments is usually inflicted, according to the judgment of the Conference as to the magnitude of the offence. 1. A reprimand from the chair. 2. The person is put back on trial. 3. Or he is suspended for a year. 4. Or he is expelled from the body.

In the spring of this year, there was a great revival of religion at Everton and its neighbourhood. Among the many clergymen to whom Wesley had been made a minister of spiritual good, was Mr. Berridge, the clergyman of this parish. Toward the latter part of the preceding year, Wesley, being at Bedford, heard that Mr. Berridge desired to see him. He accordingly set out for Everton. "I found," says he, "Mr. Berridge just taking horse, with whom I rode on, and in the evening preached at Wrestling-

worth, in a large church well filled with serious hearers. .....The next morning I preached in the church again. In the middle of the sermon a woman before me dropped down as dead, as one had done the night before. In a short time she came to herself, and remained deeply sensible of her want of Christ. We rode on to Mr. Berridge's, at Everton. For many years he was seeking to be justified by his works: but a few months ago he was thoroughly convinced 'that by grace' we 'are saved through faith.' Immediately he began to proclaim aloud the redemption that is in Jesus: and God confirmed His word exactly as He did at Bristol, in the beginning, by working repentance and faith in the hearers, and with the same violent outward symptoms. I preached at six in the evening, and five in the morning, and some were struck just as at Wrestlingworth. One of these was brought into the house, with whom we spent a considerable time in prayer."

The following are extracts from the journal of an intelligent eye-witness of the effects produced by the ministry of Mr. Berridge and Mr. Hicks during the ensuing spring and summer.

"Sunday, May 20th, 1759.—Being with Mr. B——ll at Everton, I was much fatigued, and did not rise; but Mr. B—— did, and observed several fainting and crying out while Mr. Berridge was preaching. Afterwards, at church, I heard many cry out, especially children, whose agonies were amazing: one of the eldest, a girl of ten or twelve years old, was full in view, in violent contortions of body, and weeping aloud. The church was equally crowded in the afternoon, the windows being filled within and without, and even the outside of the pulpit to the very top; so that Mr. Berridge seemed almost stifled with their breath: yet, feeble and sickly as he is, he was continually

strengthened, and his voice, for the most part, distinguishable, in the midst of all the outcries. I believe there were present three times more men than women, a great part of whom came from afar, thirty of them having set out at two in the morning, from a place thirteen miles off. The text was, 'Having the form of godliness, but denying the power thereof.' When the power of religion began to be spoken of, the presence of God really filled the place; and while poor sinners felt the sentence of death in their souls, what sounds of distress did I hear! The greatest number of them who cried, or fell, were men; but some women, and several children, felt the power of the same almighty Spirit, and seemed just sinking into hell. This occasioned a mixture of various sounds, some shrieking, some roaring aloud; the most general was a loud breathing, like that of people half strangled, and gasping for life; and, indeed, almost all the cries were like those of human creatures dying in bitter anguish. Great numbers wept without any noise: others fell down as dead; some sinking in silence; some with extreme noise and violent agitation. I stood on the pew-seat, as did a young man in the opposite pew,—an able-bodied, fresh, healthy countryman; but in a moment, while he seemed to think of nothing less, down he dropped with a violence inconceivable. The adjoining pew seemed to shake with his fall. I heard afterwards the stamping of his feet, ready to break the boards, as he lay in strong convulsions at the bottom of the pew. Among several that were struck down in the next pew, was a girl, who was as violently seized as he. When he fell, Mr. B——ll and I felt our souls thrilled with a momentary dread; as when one man is killed by a cannon-ball, another often feels the wind of it.

"Among the children who felt the arrows of the

Almighty, I saw a sturdy boy, about eight years old, who roared above his fellows, and seemed in his agony to struggle with the strength of a grown man. His face was red as scarlet; and almost all on whom God laid His hand turned either very red, or almost black. When I returned, after a little walk, to Mr. Berridge's house, I found it full of people: he was fatigued, but said he would, nevertheless, give them a word of exhortation. I stayed in the next room, and saw the girl whom I had observed so peculiarly distressed in the church, lying on the floor as one dead, but without any ghastliness in her face. In a few minutes we were informed of a woman filled with peace and joy, who was crying out just before. She had come thirteen miles, and is the same person who dreamed Mr. Berridge would come to her village on that very day wherein he did come, though without either knowing the place or the way to it. She was convinced at that time. Just as we heard of her deliverance, the girl on the floor began to stir. She was then set in a chair, and, after sighing awhile, suddenly rose up rejoicing in God: her face was covered with the most beautiful smile I ever saw. She frequently fell on her knees, but was generally running to and fro, speaking these and the like words:—'O what can Jesus do for lost sinners! He has forgiven all my sins! I am in heaven! O how He loves *me!* and how I love Him!' Meantime, I saw a thin, pale girl, weeping with sorrow for herself and joy for her companion. Quickly the smiles of Heaven came likewise on her, and her praises joined with those of the other." *

This powerful work continued day after day for a considerable period: and not at Everton only; Mr. Hicks at Wrestlingworth was similarly favoured. The narrator of

* Wesley's "Journal," vol. ii., p. 461.

the preceding account says, "I went to hear Mr. Hicks. We discoursed with him first, and were glad to hear that he had wholly given himself up to the glorious work of God, and that the power of the Highest fell upon his hearers, as upon Mr. Berridge's. While he was preaching, fifteen or sixteen persons felt the arrows of the Lord, and dropped down. A few of them cried out with the utmost violence, and with little intermission, for some hours; while the rest made no great noise, but continued struggling as in the pangs of death. I observed, besides these, one little girl deeply convinced, and a boy nine or ten years old: both of them, and several others, when carried into the parsonage-house, either lay as dead, or struggled with all their might; but in a short time their cries increased beyond measure, so that the loudest singing could scarcely be heard. Some, at last, called on me to pray, which I did, and for a time all were calm; but the storm soon began again. Mr. Hicks then prayed, and afterwards Mr. B——ll: but still, though some received consolation, others remained in deep sorrow of heart."

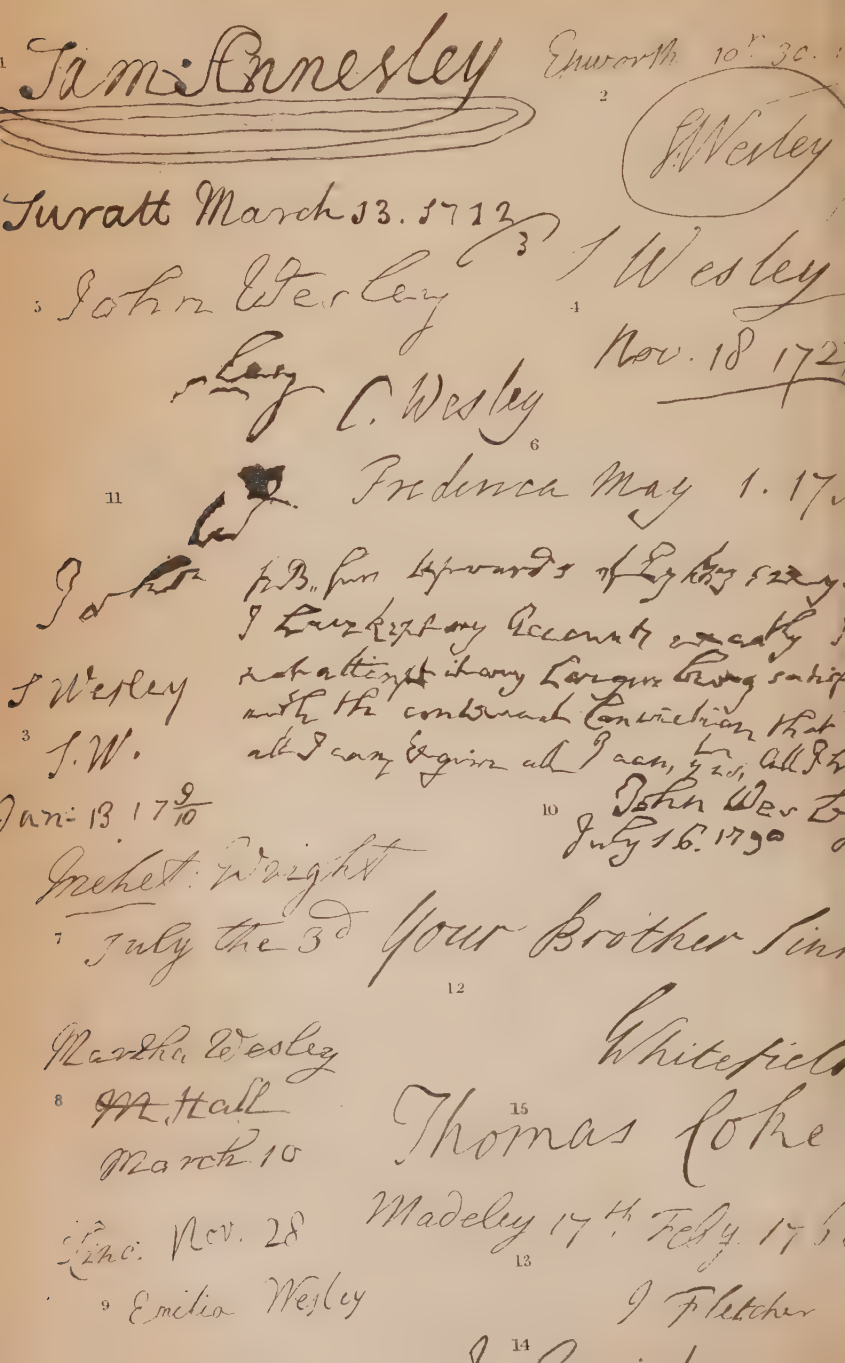
The scenes here described took place from the 20th to the 24th of May. Wesley visited Everton again early in August, and saw abundant evidence of the fruits of this genuine work of God. He observes, "During the prayers, as also during the sermon, and administration of the Sacrament, a few persons cried aloud; but it was not from sorrow, but love and joy. The same I observed in several parts of the afternoon service. In the evening I preached in Mr. Hicks's church. Two or three persons fell to the ground, and were extremely convulsed; but none cried out. One or two were filled with strong consolation."

On the 25th of November following, he again visited Everton, and perceived that some of the outward features

of the work had undergone a considerable change. Under this date, he says, "I was a little afraid my strength would not suffice for reading prayers, and preaching, and administering the Lord's Supper alone to a large number of communicants; but all was well. Mr. Hicks began his own service early, and came before I had ended my sermon. So we finished the whole before two, and I had time to breathe before the evening service.

"In the afternoon God was eminently present with us, though rather to comfort than to convince. But I observed a remarkable difference since I was here before, as to the manner of the work. None now were in trances, none cried out, none fell down or were convulsed; only some trembled exceedingly, a low murmur was heard, and many were refreshed with the multitude of peace."

To this account he added the following observations: "The danger *was*, to regard extraordinary circumstances too much, such as outcries, convulsions, visions, trances; as if these were essential to the inward work, so that it could not go on without them. Perhaps the danger *is*, to regard them too little; to condemn them altogether; to imagine they had nothing of God in them, and were an hinderance to His work. Whereas the truth is, 1. God suddenly and strongly convinced many that they were lost sinners; the natural consequence whereof were sudden outcries and strong bodily convulsions. 2. To strengthen and encourage them that believed, and to make His work more apparent, He favoured several of them with divine dreams, others with trances or visions. 3. In some of these instances, after a time, nature mixed with grace. 4. Satan likewise mimicked this work of God, in order to discredit the whole work; and yet it is not wise to give up this part any more than to give up the whole. At first it


1
Sam: Wesley
Epworth 10th 30.
2
S. Wesley
Surratt March 13. 1712
3
I Wesley
5 John Wesley
4
Nov. 18 17
C. Wesley
6
11
Frederica May 1. 17
I B. four Upwards of Eighty Years
I Give Just my Account exactly
as at present it stands Longer Living aship
with the continual Conviction that
all I can Enjoin all I can,
3 John Wes
July 16. 1790
S Wesley
3 J. W.
Jan: 13. 17 9/10
Jnchest. Wright
7 July the 3d
Your Brother Sinc
12
Martha Wesley
8 M. Hall
March 10
Whitefield
15
Thomas Coke
Madeley 17th Feby. 17
13
Emc. Nov. 28
9 Emilia Wesley
J Fletcher
14

was doubtless wholly from God. It is partly so at this day; and He will enable us to discern how far, in every case, the work is pure, and where it mixes or degenerates." *

In the early part of 1760, Wesley visited all the classes of the London Society with more exactness than ever, and found the number of members after this examination 2,350.

Conference of 1760. Edward Perronet.

The seventeenth Conference was held in Bristol, August 29th, 1760. Wesley was detained by calms and contrary winds, when returning from Ireland; but nothing was done in the business of the Conference until his arrival. He says, "I spent the two following days with the preachers, who had been waiting for me all the week; and their love and unanimity was such as soon made me forget all my labour." † This circumstance has led to the conclusion, that "there could be no Methodist Conference while Mr. Wesley lived, unless he were present, or had appointed the person who held it." A Conference, throughout the whole of his life, being principally "Conversations between the Rev. Mr. Wesley and others," ‡ it has been inferred that, unless he were there in person, or by proxy, there could be no Conference; but this subject will be more fully discussed hereafter.

Wesley pursued his way with undeviating zeal and assiduity, travelling and preaching almost without intermission; labouring to bring sinners to God, watching over the Societies everywhere with the keen eye and tender heart of an affectionate father; and repelling the assaults of his enemies, through the press, with a spirit and power truly wonderful.

* Wesley's "Journal," vol. ii., p. 494. † *Ibid.*

‡ Wesley's "Works," vol. viii., p. 287.

Two sons of the amiable and excellent Vincent Perronet, vicar of Shoreham, laboured in union with Wesley for some years. They were both men of piety, and of more than ordinary ability. But about this time Edward retired from the Methodist Connexion, and settled in Canterbury. Although brought up in the bosom of the Establishment, he had formed views of extreme hostility to the National Church; and, possessing a lively imagination, a vast fund of wit, and considerable poetic genius, he sometimes gave utterance to his thoughts in a manner which Wesley had to reprove. He at length wrote a regular poem, which he called "The Mitre," and which was a bitter satire on the National Church. It is understood that Wesley for a while succeeded in suppressing the publication of this piece; but the ardent mind of Edward Perronet could not long submit to this restraint. He left the Methodists and settled at Canterbury, where he preached to a small congregation of Dissenters; and, as the editor of a newspaper, freely availed himself of passing opportunities for censuring and ridiculing those whom he thought enthusiastic supporters of Church and State.

An extensive revival in many Societies.

In the latter part of this Methodistic year, there was a very manifest revival and extension of religion in the Societies in different and distant parts of the country. "Many persons, men and women, professed to be cleansed from all unrighteousness, and made perfect in love, in a moment; often while hearing the word, but more frequently while at prayer, or while others were praying for them. So deep in its character, and so extensive in its influence, was this work, that Wesley did not hesitate to say, 'Here began that glorious work of sanctification, which had been nearly at a stand for twenty years. From time to time it spread, first through various parts of Yorkshire, afterwards in

London, then through most parts of England, next to Dublin, and through all the south and west of Ireland. And wherever the work of sanctification increased, the whole work of God increased in all its branches. Many were convinced of sin, many justified, and many backsliders healed.'" *

Conference of 1761. Continued prosperity.

The eighteenth Conference was held in London, September 1st, 1761. Wesley reached town the preceding week, to prepare for this annual assembly; and was greatly cheered to observe the improved state of the Society. "I found," he says, "the work of God swiftly increasing here. The congregations in every place were larger than they had been for several years. Many were from day to day convinced of sin. Many found peace with God. Many backsliders were healed, yea, filled with joy unspeakable. And many believers entered into such a rest, as it had not before entered into their hearts to conceive. Meantime the enemy was not wanting in his endeavours to sow tares among the good seed. I saw this clearly, but durst not use violence, lest, in plucking up the tares, I should root up the wheat also." †

The state of the work of God necessarily came under the consideration of the Conference; and Wesley endeavoured to enforce on others and to give practical effect to the wise judgment which he had formed, and which has just been transcribed. Conference having begun on Tuesday, and ended on Saturday, he, after spending a fortnight more in London, and guarding both the preachers and the people against running into extremes on either side, proceeded to Bristol. These extremes, says Mr. Myles, (who became an itinerant preacher a few years afterward, and, having been long intimate with Wesley, had abundant

* Myles, p. 73. † Wesley's "Journal," August 29th, 1761.

opportunities of informing himself on the subject,) were, "1. Despising the work altogether because of the extravagancies of some who were engaged in it. 2. Justifying all those extravagancies as if they were essential to it. Mr. Wesley ever observed the sober path of Scripture and reason."* In respect to his own conduct toward the work this judgment is undoubtedly correct; but it is nevertheless open to very serious question, whether the opinion of another minister, equally as favourable to Mr. Wesley as Mr. Myles, is not substantially just. Mr. C. Atmore says on this case, "Mr. Wesley, who ever acted with great caution, did not at first, perhaps, resist these extravagancies with that firmness which he ought to have done; by which means the persons who favoured them daily increased in number." †

The progress of the work was continued. At no preceding period had the Societies generally been found in such a state of prosperity as at the beginning of this year. Wesley thus speaks of this fact on his arrival at Bristol immediately after the Conference: "Here likewise I had the satisfaction to observe a considerable increase of the work of God. The congregations were exceeding large, and the people hungering and thirsting after righteousness; and every day afforded us fresh instances of persons convinced of sin, or converted to God. So that it seems God was pleased to pour out His Spirit this year on every part both of England and Ireland; perhaps in a manner we had never seen before." ‡

But while the work advanced everywhere, the evil which has been noticed was still in progress. The following entry

* Myles's "Chronological History," p. 74.

† Atmore's "Memorial," p. 268.

‡ Wesley's "Journal," September 21st, 1761.

is found in Wesley's "Journal:" "Dec. 21.—I retired again to Lewisham, and wrote, 'Further Thoughts on Christian Perfection.' Had the cautions given herein been observed, how much scandal had been prevented! Why were they not? Because my own familiar friend was even now forming a party against me." Wesley spent the latter part of this year in Ireland, where he witnessed a very glorious revival. Great numbers were converted to God, and many persons made partakers of perfect love. He left these scenes of mercy and joy to attend the Conference in Bristol.

It may in this day excite surprise, that clerical irregularities in favour of Methodism, as well as outrageous violations of all order and humanity in the persecution of it, should have been tolerated to the extent they then were. The latter were not unfrequently occasioned by criminal supineness and neglect in the superior ecclesiastical authorities; and the former were sometimes owing to a just appreciation of spiritual religion, which induced bishops to overlook the niceties of ecclesiastical discipline. We add an agreeable instance of such conduct.

The Rev. Mr. Grimshaw having continued his "periodical excursions into distant counties for a series of years, to the great annoyance of the clergy, they at last complained to the bishop, in such terms as led him to think that it was his duty to lay some restraint upon this rambling and enthusiastic son of the Church. He therefore announced his intention to hold a confirmation service in Mr. Grimshaw's church; and expressed a wish to have an interview with him on that occasion. They accordingly met in the vestry of Haworth church, on the day appointed; and while the clergy and laity were assembling in great numbers to see his lordship and be present at the

confirmation, the following conversation took place. 'I have heard,' said the bishop, 'many extraordinary reports respecting your conduct, Mr. Grimshaw. It has been stated to me, that you not only preach in private houses in your parish, but also travel up and down and preach where you have a mind, without consulting either your diocesan or the clergy into whose parishes you obtrude your labours: and that your discourses are very loose; that, in fact, you can, and do, preach about anything. That I may be able to judge for myself of both your doctrine and manner of stating it, I give you notice, that I shall expect you to preach before me and the clergy present, in two hours hence, and from the text which I am about to name.' After repeating the text, the bishop added, 'Sir, you may now retire and make what preparation you can, while I confirm the young people.' 'My lord,' said Mr. Grimshaw, looking out of the vestry-door into the church, 'see what multitudes of people are here! Why should the order of the service be reversed, and the congregation kept out of the sermon for two hours? Send a clergyman to read prayers, and I will begin immediately.' After prayers, Mr. Grimshaw ascended the pulpit, and commenced an extempore prayer for the bishop, the people, and the young people about to be confirmed; and wrestled with God for His assistance and blessing, until the congregation, the clergy, and the bishop, were moved to tears. After the service, the clergy gathered around his lordship, eager to ascertain what proceedings he intended to adopt, in order to restrain Mr. Grimshaw from such rash and extemporaneous expositions of God's holy word. The bishop looked round upon them with paternal benignity; and, taking Mr. Grimshaw by the hand, said in a tremulous voice, and with a faltering tongue, 'I would to God, that

all the clergy in my diocese were like this good man.' Mr. Grimshaw afterwards observed to a party of friends whom he had invited to take tea with his family that evening, 'I did expect to be turned out of my parish on this occasion; but if I had, I would have joined my friend Wesley, taken my saddle-bags, and gone to one of his poorest Circuits.'"*

Leeds

Nineteenth Conference, 1762.

The nineteenth Conference began in ~~Bristol~~, August 9th, 1762. Mr. Wesley wrote respecting it, "Our Conference began on Tuesday morning, and we had great reason to bless God for His gracious presence, from the beginning to the end."

After five months' absence, Wesley returned to London on the 19th of August, and writes in his "Journal:" "As I expected, the sower of tares had not been idle; but I believe a great part of his work was undone in one hour, when we met at West Street. I pointed out to those who had more heat than light, the snares which they had well-nigh fallen into. And hitherto they were of an humble, teachable spirit. So for the present the snare was broken. Sat., 21.—My brother and I had a long conversation with Mr. Maxfield, and freely told him whatever we disliked. In some things we found he had been blamed without cause; others he promised to alter; so we were thoroughly satisfied with the conversation, believing all misunderstandings were removed." †

But this hope was fallacious. The evils of which he complained did not cease, but increased. The intelligence which he received led him on November 1st to write a long and very earnest letter to Mr. Maxfield. In this epistle he

* Rev. A. Strachan's "Life and Times of the Rev. George Lowe," p. 37.

† Wesley's "Journal," under the date.

plainly and faithfully told him what parts of his teaching and conduct he disapproved; and especially of the divisive spirit which he and those who acted with him manifested, although he expressed his confident belief that they did not wish any separation. This effort was as unsuccessful as the preceding: the evil was indeed incurable. It consisted in erroneous doctrine. Mr. Maxfield, George Bell, and others, taught that a justified person is not in Christ, not born of God; that a person saved from sin needs no self-examination, no private prayer, nothing but believing; that it made men perfect as angels; that persons pure in heart cannot fall from grace. These tenets led them to arrogate to themselves an unreasonable distinction, likely to engender pride and vain-glory. They said, no person thus saved could be taught by any who was not. They were therefore led to speak of themselves as the only persons who really understood the Gospel, and were prepared to teach it; as if all the clergy, and Methodist preachers also, were in spiritual darkness. And, lastly, it induced them to invest the workings of their own imaginations with the authority of inspiration, calling it the voice of the Spirit, and neglecting knowledge, wisdom, and reason in general. In consequence of these errors, some of their prayers were wild rhapsodies; and George Bell took it on himself to affirm, in January, 1763, that the "end of the world would be on the 28th of February following." This foolish prediction was repeated so often, and so earnestly, that many persons were alarmed. Wesley spoke clearly and firmly against these extravagancies; but he did not expel the persons who perpetrated them. On this occasion, which was certainly one of the greatest trials of Wesley's life, he seems to have allowed his kindly feeling to dictate to his judgment. One of the members of the Society at length said

The schism, errors, and misconduct of T. Maxfield and G. Bell. Wesley's forbearance. The separation.

to him, "Sir, I employ several men. Now, if one of my servants will not follow my directions, is it not right for me to discard him at once? Pray, Sir, apply this to Mr. Bell." His answer showed the influence under which he acted: "It is right," he said, "to discard a servant. But what would you do if he were your son?" Wesley, indeed, did not discard them. He devised means to prevent the excess of extravagance by appointing other preachers to be present at all the meetings which they attended, because, as he said, "I am willing to bear the reproach of Christ, but I will not bear the reproach of enthusiasm, if I can help it." These measures led the party to provide other places for meeting. At length Mr. Maxfield was determined to separate, and accordingly refused to preach at the Foundery agreeably to his appointment; on which Wesley hastened from Westminster, where he would have preached, and supplied the place, taking the words of Jacob for his text, "If I am bereaved of my children, I am bereaved." About 170 members left the Methodist Society with Maxfield and Bell.

Erasmus, a Greek bishop, ordains Methodist preachers.

Another occurrence of some consequence took place this year, respecting which Mr. Myles's account is here transcribed. In the beginning of "1763, a Greek bishop visited London. Mr. Wesley made inquiry respecting the reality of his office; and was fully satisfied that he was a true bishop. 1. By Dr. John Jones, who wrote to the Patriarch of Smyrna on the subject. He gave it under his hand, that *Erasmus* (that was the bishop's name) was Bishop of *Arcadia* in *Crete*. 2. He was identified by the testimony of several gentlemen, who had seen him in Turkey. Wesley then applied to him to ordain Dr. Jones, in order to assist him in administering the Lord's Supper to the Societies, which he did. The Rev. Augustus Top-

lady took great offence at this, and published his objections, saying, 'he could only be a minister of the *Greek* Church, which could give him no legal right to act as a minister of the Church of England.' Mr. Thomas Olivers answered Mr. Toplady, by consent of Mr. Wesley; and urged, '1. The doctor did not *officiate* as a clergyman of the Church of England, but as an assistant to Mr. Wesley, in preaching and administering the Lord's Supper to his Societies. 2. Whoever is episcopally ordained is a minister of the Church universal, and as such has a right to officiate in any part of the globe. 3. This all Episcopalians, who understand their own doctrines, know; hence it is that the Church of England frequently employs, without re-ordination, priests ordained even by Popish bishops. 4. Any bishop in England will acknowledge the validity of the ordination of a Popish priest by a Popish bishop.'

"Mr. Toplady further asked Mr. Wesley in the publication alluded to, 'Did you, or did you not, *strongly press* this supposed Greek bishop to consecrate you a bishop at large?' Mr. Olivers answered, '*No.* But, suppose he had, where would have been the blame? Mr. Wesley was connected with a number of persons, who had given every proof which the nature of the thing allows, that they have an inward call to preach the Gospel. Both he and they would be glad if they had an *outward call* too. But no bishop in England would give it them. What wonder, then, if he were to endeavour to procure it by any other innocent means?'"

We learn two things from this anecdote. 1. That Wesley then thought no person should administer the sacraments to his Societies without episcopal ordination. 2. That even then he began to feel the necessity of having

some of the preachers ordained, in order to qualify them for performing a duty which was every year becoming more necessary.

Some others of his preachers, travelling and local, got Erasmus to ordain them. This conduct displeased Wesley very much; and those who would not desist from acting as clergymen independent of him, were excluded from the Connexion. Mr. Charles Wesley would not recognise this ordination, nor allow Dr. Jones to assist him in administering the Lord's Supper; so that the end Wesley had in view, in getting him ordained, altogether failed, through the opposition he met with from his brother.*

Thus far Mr. Myles. It may be added, that this objection of Mr. Charles Wesley to recognise his ordination pained Dr. Jones so much, that he left the Connexion. He was a man of considerable learning, and some eminence as a physician; but, being a person of deep piety and considerable ministerial ability, he cheerfully relinquished an honourable and lucrative profession, that he might preach the Gospel of Christ. He was afterwards ordained by the Bishop of London, and soon after presented with the living of Harwich.

These facts show that the Methodism of this period grew beyond the means which its founder could command, and called for the recognition of great principles which he was not then prepared to adopt, and to which his brother was violently opposed. Some of these Wesley was afterwards led to acknowledge; but it was not until after his death that the case was fully met. It will be necessary to refer briefly to these circumstances towards the close of this chapter.

This year, or perhaps the preceding one, is memorable

* Myles's "Chronological History," pp. 75–77.

Institution of public prayer-meetings.

in the annals of Methodism for the introduction of a practice of far more importance than the ordinations of the Greek bishop, namely, the institution of public prayer-meetings. "Mr. Matthew Mayer, of Portwood Hall, near Stockport, and John Morris, of Manchester, both young men, established weekly prayer-meetings at Davy-Hulme, Dukinfield, Ashton, and other places. As numbers of persons attended these meetings who were utterly ignorant of the things of God, these young men exhorted them to 'flee from the wrath to come.' The effects were surprising; upwards of sixty persons were awakened, and added to the Society at Davy-Hulme, in a few weeks after the establishment of these meetings in the village." By this experiment prayer-meetings were found to supply favourable opportunities for exercising the talents of young men, and for training them for various degrees of usefulness in the Church. This was so strikingly the case in the present instance, that similar meetings were soon established in different parts of the kingdom.

Conference of 1763. List of Circuits. Worn-out Preachers' Fund.

The twentieth Conference was held in London. It began on July 19th, 1763, and continued to the 23rd. Alluding to the recent secession of Mr. Maxwell and his friends, Wesley wrote, "It was a great blessing that we had peace among ourselves, while so many were making themselves ready for battle."*

What was most important in the Minutes of the preceding Conferences from 1748, was at this time collected and published; and, as already stated, the collection improperly stands in the Octavo "Minutes" under the date 1749. These regulations will be referred to hereafter, so far as they relate to the theology and discipline of the

* Wesley's "Journal."

body. Amongst other points to be noted here is, an amended list of the Circuits which had been formed, and which, in the three kingdoms, amounted to thirty-one. Twenty in England:—1. London. 2. Sussex. 3. Norwich. 4. Bedford. 5. Wiltshire. 6. Bristol. 7. Devonshire. 8. Cornwall. 9. Staffordshire. 10. Chester. 11. Whitehaven. 12. Lincolnshire. 13. Sheffield. 14. Leeds. 15. Birstal. 16. Haworth. 17. York. 18. Yarm. 19. The Dales. 20. Newcastle. Two in Wales:—1. Pembrokeshire. 2. Brecknockshire. Two in Scotland:—1. Edinburgh. 2. Aberdeen. Seven in Ireland:—1. Dublin. 2. Waterford. 3. Cork. 4. Limerick. 5. Castlebar. 6. Athlone. 7. The North.

It is scarcely possible at this distance of time, and with the scanty fragments of information which have been preserved, to form any adequate idea of the labour, endurance, and suffering, which this work must have cost. Twenty years only had elapsed since Wesley, with his brother and two or three laymen, had begun to sow the seed of the kingdom by field and itinerant preaching. Yet now, notwithstanding it had been frowned on by the learned, persecuted by the violent, lampooned by the witty, opposed by open and violent enemies, and harassed by the defection of former friends, the proclamation of Gospel mercy had been made through the length and breadth of the land. Truly the fruits of such labours are wonderful. At this time several of the preachers were feeling the physical effects of their early exposure and incessant labours; and the question pressed itself on the attention of the Conference, "How may provision be made for old worn-out preachers?" This question was answered by the institution of a general fund to which every preacher was expected to subscribe annually, and from which such worn-out preachers as were

in need were to be supplied. The original contribution was ten shillings annually.

Conference of 1764.

The twenty-first Conference was held in Bristol, August 6th, 1764. It is very evident that the great success which had crowned the labours of Wesley and of his helpers now embarrassed him. Notwithstanding his own steady attachment and his brother's more intense devotedness to the Established Church, it was becoming every day more and more apparent, that, through Methodist agency, a number of religious communities were being formed in every part of the country, which, indeed, were *de facto* Churches, but which, although possessed of such organization as preserved to them a preached Gospel, and means suitable to promote a growth in grace, were not provided with those ordinances which every Christian may claim as a privilege, and which he is bound to observe as a duty. It has been shown, that Wesley in the preceding year endeavoured to supply this felt want, by getting some of his preachers ordained through the Greek bishop Erasmus; but, in consequence of Mr. Charles Wesley refusing to recognise such ordination, this means utterly failed. Afterward, Wesley sent a circular letter to all the clergymen of the Church of England whom he knew to be converted, inviting them to unite with him, and with each other, in a combined effort to spread scriptural holiness through the nation. The number thus addressed was between fifty and sixty persons; yet of these only three vouchsafed him any answer; and but one of the replies, that of the Rev. Vincent Perronet, was a hearty acceptance of the overture.

This measure also having failed, another was attempted by some of those pious clergymen who had been addressed in the circular letter. Twelve of them attended this Con-

ference, for the purpose of urging the requirement which had been made some years before by Mr. Walker of Truro, —that in every parish in which there was a pious clergyman, the Societies formed there should be given up to his direction and oversight. Nor is it very easy to perceive how this request could have been refused on the principle upon which Wesley acted when he first began his career of itinerant and field preaching. But, before this time, he had learned more of the nature of the Christian life, and of the aid which is required to nurture and maintain it, in large bodies of Christian people. He had also been brought under a deep sense of personal responsibility. By his means, and through those who laboured with him, great numbers of people in different parts of the country had been brought to the experience of salvation. Hitherto, by class-meetings, quarterly visitations, meetings of Society, and love-feasts, he had afforded these persons means of Christian instruction and edification. He therefore felt doubtful, whether he could conscientiously comply with this request, either on his own account or on theirs. On this subject he wrote to the Rev. Mr. Walker of Truro, under date "September 16th, 1757." Admitting that the clergyman referred to was a gracious person, and one who preached the whole Gospel, "I do not know," he says, "that every one who preaches the truth, has wisdom and experience to govern a flock; I do not know whether he could or would give that flock all the advantages for holiness which they now enjoy; and to leave them to him, before I was assured of this, would be neither justice nor mercy. Unless they also were assured of this, they could not in conscience give up themselves to him; and I have neither right nor power to dispose of them contrary to their conscience.

Means devised for providing ministerial ordinances. They fail.

"'But then,' it is objected, 'they are his already by *legal establishment.*' Does Mr. Conon, or you, think that the king and parliament have a right to prescribe to me what pastor I should use? If they prescribe one which I know God never sent, am I obliged to receive him? If he be sent of God, can I receive him with a clear conscience till I know he is? And even when I do, if I believe my former pastor is more profitable to my soul, can I leave him without sin? Or has any man living a right to require this of me? I," said Wesley, "extend this to every Gospel minister in England. Before I could with a clear conscience leave a Methodist Society even to such a one, all these considerations must come in." *

These reasons induced Wesley to refuse compliance with the request of the twelve clergymen who visited this Conference, although it was urgently supported by his brother, who entered into this question with great earnestness and energy, and even went so far as to assert that if he were a parish minister, *the Methodist preachers should not preach in his parish.* But, as Mr. Myles, on this case, observes, nothing could move Wesley but Scripture and reason; he saw that these taught him to decline the overture; his preachers unanimously supported him; and it was determined to submit to all the difficulties of the anomalous ecclesiastical position in which the Methodist Societies then stood, rather than expose what they knew to be the fruits of a great work of God to hazard, by any unwarrantable alteration.

Before closing this portion of our history, it will be necessary to give some further explanations on a few subjects connected with the rise and progress of Methodism, which could not conveniently be discussed in the course

* Wesley's "Works," vol. xiii., p. 192.

of the narrative, but which nevertheless merit special attention.

Lay preaching providentially appointed.

The first of these is the institution of lay preaching. This lay at the foundation of Methodism. Without it, the Connexion could not have come into existence. Wesley, it is true, had several very intimate, pious, and zealous friends among the clergy. They were the companions of his early piety, and some of them remained in union with him for many years. But great and important as were the countenance and aid which he received from Perronet, Grimshaw, and others, who continued to co-operate with him, it could never have led to the formation and continued culture of the Methodist Societies. This, in the circumstances in which Wesley was placed, was only possible by the employment of laymen as preachers of the Gospel.

How could this be done by a High Church minister, as Wesley is acknowledged to have been? At first sight it would seem impossible. But the solution of the difficulty is found in that which was the first principle of Wesley's life, throughout the whole course of his public ministry. And this was not ambition; it was not a thirst for power: it was simply a paramount regard for the glory of God, and the good of souls. This is apparent from the manner in which he was led to sanction the practice now under consideration. A politic or ambitious man would have defended the propriety of employing laymen as preachers either by scriptural authority, or by ecclesiastical precedent; both might easily have been done. Wesley, however, did not, as has been wickedly insinuated, take the initiative in this matter; but when, at length, Thomas Maxfield, impelled by a divine conviction and the love of souls, broke through all restraint, and began to preach, he hastened to town to put an end to the

innovation. Nor can we doubt his religious sincerity in this purpose. He certainly meant to silence the forward layman, until his mother wisely advised him to be cautious. Knowing her views, he followed her advice; and, on hearing Maxfield, was at once brought to share her opinion.

But even then he did not seek the sanction of ecclesiastical antiquity for the practice, nor labour to reconcile it by any specious argumentation to the existing order of the Church. On the contrary, he boldly adopted an *experimentum crucis*, and staked the whole case on clear and obvious practical considerations. He satisfied himself as to this individual case by careful examination; and, having done so, from thence elicited a general law to guide him in all similar cases. When, therefore, in future years, any one offered himself as a preacher, Wesley at once inquired, "1. Has he grace? Has he given satisfactory proof that he is converted, that he is living a holy life, and that he is fully devoted to the will of God? 2. Has he gifts as well as grace? Has he, in some tolerable degree, a sound understanding and sound judgment in the things of God, a clear perception of salvation by faith? and has God given him such a degree of utterance that he can express himself justly, readily, clearly? 3. Has he fruit? Are any convinced of sin and converted to God under his ministrations?" He regarded an affirmative answer to these inquiries as perfectly conclusive. His sound judgment assured him, that no man could give satisfactory replies to these questions, unless he were truly pious and really called of God to preach His Gospel. No candidate for a medical diploma, no applicant for a naval or military commission, can possibly afford such proofs of suitable capacity for the situation he seeks, as such affirmative answers afford that a man is divinely called to preach the

Gospel. Wesley did not seek for precedents; he did not ransack ecclesiastical history: he judged, and rightly judged, that if no layman had ever preached before, the man in whom these evidences were found was fully entitled to do so.

But the question respecting lay preaching did not terminate here. This decision opened the way for any godly man, suitably qualified, to preach: and that irrespective of other circumstances; whether, as appears to have been the case with Thomas Maxfield, all his time was devoted to the work of God; or, like John Nelson in the outset of his course, he was engaged as a labouring mason throughout the day, and preached the Gospel to his neighbours from his cottage door at night.

It was, indeed, only by the precursive labours of such self-supporting preachers as Nelson, that the way could be prepared for the extensive employment of laymen as itinerant ministers entirely set apart for the work. And hence, from the beginning, local preachers have been a necessary element of Methodism. Nor is it easy to conceive how a great work of grace, diffusing a preached Gospel over every part of the kingdom, could have been reared up by any other means. These local preachers, while providing for their own temporal wants by their week-day exertions, have greatly contributed to the diffusion of the Gospel in every period of Methodist history. But it is not merely as an important class of religious agency that they are to be chiefly regarded. They have formed the *militia corps* out of which the ministry has been selected. Here the talents of the men were tested, their gifts and graces exercised; in this school the preachers and the people saw the effect of their ministrations, and from thence suitable candidates for the ministry have been chosen and approved.

It must be admitted, that Wesley at this time did not recognise persons, even when so selected by the choice of the Church, approved by his own judgment, and called by him into the itinerant work, as ministers. He still regarded them as laymen. Yet it may be fairly questioned whether England ever saw an equal number of men engaged in the dissemination of truth, more worthy the appellation of Christian ministers than the first Methodist preachers; and, looked at from the present day, their claim to that high character is still unquestionable.

It is not certain, however, that this backwardness of the founder of Methodism to recognise what he afterward admitted to be a scriptural doctrine and usage, inflicted any serious injury on the cause to which he devoted his life. The temporary inconvenience which it occasioned was more than compensated by the undoubted proof thus afforded of Wesley's conscientiousness and sincerity. It proved that the work in which he was engaged he believed to be eminently the work of God; that he had to do the best he could, according to the light he possessed, and the means within his reach, and had then to trust the whole matter with the great Head of the Church. And no chapter in the history of God's providential dealings with mankind contains a more marked interposition of divine wisdom and power, than that which records the rise and progress of Methodism.

The extensive and cruel persecutions by which Wesley and Methodism were opposed.

Another prominent element of this history, and one which has been reserved for notice here, is the violent persecution with which the Wesleys and their friends were assailed. It is believed, that the manner, extent, and continued fury of this persecution are without a parallel in English history. Most of the other aggressions which have been made on religion have taken place under the cover of

real or pretended law, or by the will and authority of cruel and violent rulers; but this was originated and carried on without law, and in defiance of it, by the outrageous violence of rude and vulgar mobs, very frequently instigated and urged on by the malignant feelings of gentlemen, magistrates, and clergymen.

It is a singular circumstance that the first public interruption and opposition that Wesley received in his out-door preaching was from the celebrated Beau Nash, the noted master of the ceremonies at Bath. Great expectation had been raised in the public mind, by reports respecting a threatened opposition to Wesley on this occasion; and he was entreated not to preach, lest some fearful calamity might happen. He, however, was not the man to be deterred, by any apprehension of consequences, from discharging a religious duty. He accordingly took his place, and began to preach. For a while he proceeded in quiet; but at length Mr. Nash appeared, and demanded by what authority he did those things. Wesley replied, "By authority of Jesus Christ, conveyed to me by the (now) Archbishop of Canterbury, when he laid hands upon me, and said, 'Take thou authority to preach the Gospel.'" Then Mr. Nash objected to Wesley's proceeding by asserting, it was "contrary to Act of Parliament." This, said he, "is a conventicle." To which Mr. Wesley rejoined, "The conventicles mentioned in that Act, (as the preamble shows,) were seditious meetings; but this is not such, here is no shadow of sedition; therefore it is not contrary to the Act." Nash replied, "I say it is: and besides, your preaching frightens people out of their wits." But when asked by Wesley whether he had ever heard him preach, he said he had not, but judged from common report; to which judgment Wesley demurred, as resting on insuffi-

cient grounds. Nash, however, not willing to be thus silenced, demanded what the people met there for; on which an old woman cried out, "Leave him to me, let an old woman answer him.—You, Mr. Nash, take care of your body, we take care of our souls, and for our souls' food we come here:" on which he retired. This unmannerly and profane intrusion, however, was but the beginning of a series of annoyances and persecutions. On the Thursday following, two men, hired for that purpose, began singing a ballad in the midst of Wesley's prayer, as he was preparing to preach on Priest-down.

This spirit was soon afterward manifested in acts of greater violence; so that on April 1st, 1740, while expounding a portion of Scripture in Bristol, Wesley says, "the children of Belial had laboured to disturb us several nights before, but now it seemed as if all the hosts of the aliens were come together with one consent. Not only the courts and the alleys, but all the street, upwards and downwards, was filled with people, shouting, cursing, and swearing, and ready to swallow the ground with fierceness and rage. The mayor sent orders that they should disperse. But they set him at nought. The chief constable came next in person, who was till then sufficiently prejudiced against us. But they insulted him, also, in so gross a manner, as I believe fully opened his eyes. At length, the mayor sent several of his officers, who took the ringleaders into custody, and did not go till the rest were dispersed." The next day, "the rioters were brought up to the Court, the Quarter Sessions being held that day. They began to excuse themselves" by saying many things of Wesley. "But the mayor cut them all short, saying, 'What Mr. Wesley is, is nothing to you. I will keep the

peace: I will have no rioting in this city.'" * This just and wise assertion of the civic power in defence of order and the repression of tumult, secured liberty of worship in Bristol. It was so also in London. There for a while mobs committed grievous outrages. At first, Mr. Wesley's presence of mind, and serious appeals to the consciences of those who could hear him, prevented serious mischief. But on Sunday evening, September 14th, 1740, a great crowd waited about his house until his return from worship, when, on his leaving the carriage, they quite surrounded him; but, instead of being terrified, he seized it as a gracious opportunity of doing good, and instantly began to preach to them with such power, that they quailed before the word, and soon quietly dispersed. A similar result was seen at the Foundery a few days afterward. Wesley speaks of this occasion thus: "A great number of men, having got into the middle of the Foundery, began to speak great swelling words, so that my voice could hardly be heard, while I was reading the eleventh chapter of the Acts. But, immediately after, the hammer of the word brake the rocks in pieces: all quietly heard the glad tidings of salvation; and some, I trust, not in vain." † But it was not always that the voice of the preacher could be heard, or, being heard, could subdue those who were determined to interrupt the worship of God. On January 25th, 1742, while Wesley was preaching in Long Lane, a violent mob assailed the house, and throwing large stones on the roof, the tiles were broken, and the stones and broken tiles fell in on the people, whose lives were endangered. On this occasion a ringleader was given in charge of a constable, and taken before a magistrate, who bound him over

* Wesley's "Journal," April 1st and 2nd, 1740.

† *Ibid.*, October 18th, 1740.

to appear at the Sessions to answer for the assault. Still the mobs became more dangerous than ever, until on Sunday September 12th, this same year, Wesley was preaching in an open place near Whitechapel, when a large multitude was gathered together. Some listened attentively, while others laboured to disturb the preacher and congregation. At first they tried to drive a herd of cows among the people, but the brutes could not be induced to do what the more brutal men intended. The disappointed mob then began to throw stones, one of which struck the preacher between the eyes, and cut his forehead, so that he had to continue his sermon while wiping away the blood from the wound.

As these acts of violence were made known through the press, they attracted the attention of men in authority, who acted as became rulers of a Christian country. On the last day of 1742, Sir John Ganson, chairman of the Middlesex magistrates, waited on Wesley, and said, "Sir, you have no need to suffer these riotous mobs to molest you as they have done so long. I, and all the other Middlesex magistrates, have orders from above to do you justice whenever you apply to us."* It does not seem very evident why any "orders from above" should be required to induce magistrates to do "justice" to any person who applied to them. This, however, seems to have been necessary on this occasion; and, to the honour of those in power, these orders were given, and Wesley pursued his labours in the metropolis without further persecution or interruption.

It was not generally so in the provinces; and for this reason, that the clergy and magistrates, in many instances, instead of repressing disorder, and putting down lawless violence, lent their sanction and encouragement to these

* Wesley's "Works," vol. xiii., p. 294.

evils. And what is remarkable, this was done to the greatest extent where the evangelical labours of Mr. Wesley were most needed, as among the miners of Cornwall, the people in the south of Ireland, and amid the dense population of Staffordshire.

The religious state of Cornwall before the introduction of Methodism was fearfully low and dark: this is too well known to require either proof or illustration. It is equally certain, that the preaching of the Gospel by the Methodist ministers was attended with abundant success; great numbers in every part of the county were brought to the experience of religion, and evidenced its reality and power by a consistent deportment. And this change, which should have commended them to the admiration of their fellows, and the special and prayerful concern of the clergy, strangely exposed them to the ill-will and violent opposition of both.

It is not necessary to go into any further detail of the outrages which resulted from these bad feelings. The following facts stand out in disgraceful prominence in the history of this period: 1. That the lowest of the people were sometimes incited to murderous violence by the most earnest and long-continued appeals from the pulpits of the Established Church: 2. That, in a few instances, clergymen, as in the case of the Rev. George White, of Colne, put themselves at the head of the mob, and seriously endangered the lives of peaceable and pious men: 3. That both clerical and lay magistrates most explicitly and repeatedly refused redress to quiet and innocent persons who had been grossly and cruelly assaulted, and whose goods and dwellings had been, in many instances, destroyed by brutal violence, because they would not promise to abandon Wesley, and renounce Methodism: and, 4. It is certain that in this way

not only was the peace of society disturbed, and property to a great amount destroyed, but many lives were lost. If ever professed Protestants of set purpose outraged every principle of Christian liberty, if ever Englishmen violated every obligation of civil and religious freedom, it was in these foul and scandalous aggressions on Methodist preachers and their congregations.

Religious revivals.

There is yet another subject which must receive a brief notice. Many times, in the course of the preceding narrative, has there been occasion to mention the occurrence of what have been called "revivals of religion." These have been ascribed to the special outpouring of the Holy Spirit on individuals and congregations at particular times and places. It is not intended here to enter into any defence of such gracious visitations against the objections of those persons who deny sensible conversion as a great Christian privilege. Wesley's itinerant life, labour, and success, arose out of his experience of pardon and adoption, through faith in Christ. Methodism, in its origin and end, is but an evangelical effort to spread these blessings through the world. Those, therefore, who deny the possible attainment of this salvation must at once reject Methodism altogether as a thing of nought.

But it has happened, that many who honestly believe in the doctrine of justification by faith, and fully admit that it is the common privilege of Christians to rejoice in a sense of the divine favour, cannot, nevertheless, receive the accounts which are given of such special visitations of the Spirit, by which scores, and sometimes hundreds, of persons are, in some given neighbourhood, and in a very short time, brought to the knowledge of salvation. Why is this? Was not the experience of Gospel blessing introduced into our world in this manner? What was the

glorious effusion of Pentecost, but a revival of this kind? And as we draw nearer to the time when the glory of the Lord shall cover the earth, may we not expect further wonderful displays of God's awakening and converting power, to accompany the faithful ministrations of His holy Gospel? Many such revivals will be mentioned in the following chapters; and it is regarded as the glory of Methodism, that every age of its progress has been favoured with such signal displays of God's mercy and saving power.

There are, however, many who will agree with us thus far in terms, but who, nevertheless, turn away from such recitals with disapprobation, if not with disgust, on account of what appears to them the inexplicable conduct and unwarrantable extravagance of many of the persons who were thus influenced. Wesley's views on this subject and his defence of these revivals are given on a preceding page. It is only necessary to add, that all that is extraordinary in these cases is the intensity and extended prevalence of divine influence on the human soul. In the case of an ordinary individual conversion, the Spirit of God first sheds light on the mind, so that the vast importance of spiritual things is realized; the nature of sin is seen; it is felt to be a deadly evil; the awakened sinner turns away with loathing from all its allurements, and seeks refuge from its guilt, and from the wrath of God which it has evoked, in the mediation and atonement of the Lamb of God who died to take away the sins of the world; until, at length, by faith in Christ, pardoning mercy is obtained, and the penitent soul is "translated from the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of God's dear Son." This process ordinarily occupies an extended period, and the cases, alas! are solitary,—at least, very few in number at

any given time and place. Weeks or months not unfrequently intervene between the time when this spiritual light dawns, and the happy moment when the peace of God is obtained; and seldom does a penitent, while thus seeking mercy, know of any one else in similar circumstances. It is the remarkable feature of these revivals, that the awakening and convincing power of the Spirit is so great, that the very depths of the soul are moved to an extent which seems to render a long continuance in this state all but impossible. The mind is carried through the different stages of awakening, conviction, penitence, and faith, by a mighty power; and the effects are proportionably intense, and are consequently evinced by persons of different temperaments in different manners. Nor can it be regarded as surprising, when the case is calmly considered, if, when many persons are thus affected in one place, their manifestations of sorrow, desire, or joy should exhibit appearances of disorder or even of extravagance. Much of this may, sometimes, be obviated by the judicious conduct of mature Christians, and especially by the wise precautions and direction of experienced ministers; but that everything of the kind can be certainly prevented is too much to expect. There is nothing, therefore, in these revivals which Wesley approved, that is not in perfect accordance with the teaching of Scripture, and the work of the Spirit in its ordinary saving operation on the mind.

Supernatural phenomena.

The greatest objection will, however, be felt to the allusion made by Wesley, not merely to the work of the Holy Spirit on the mind, but to other direct supernatural agency and its effects. In the absence of that perfect knowledge of those cases which he possessed, we cannot pretend to judge, and shall not undertake to justify, every opinion or statement of this kind which he has recorded. But, considering the

religious darkness of that period, and that not only did sin fearfully prevail, but, through the influence of the works of Hobbes, Toland, Blount, Collins, and a host of other infidel writers, all the essentials of religion, and even the existence of a spiritual world, were questioned; it does not seem unreasonable to believe that God should allow supernatural evidences occasionally to appear of the things which are "unseen" and "eternal;" especially as numerous phenomena are presented in the history of these times, which can be explained on no other principle.

CHAPTER III.

FROM THE CONFERENCE OF 1765 TO THAT OF 1777.

Conference of 1765. State of Methodism. The stations of the preachers in 1765.

With the Conference of 1765, the Methodist Connexion is presented to our view as a great public religious institution; although it was not then, nor, indeed, long afterwards, in a state of maturity. Neither the evangelical principles upon which Wesley had acted from the beginning, nor the financial or disciplinary economy of the Connexion, had been yet fully defined, much less brought into action; but Methodism had nevertheless to some considerable extent pervaded the country. The whole of England, Wales, Scotland, and Ireland was divided into thirty-nine Circuits. To each of these one or more preachers were appointed at the yearly Conference. The first named of the preachers on each Circuit was, under Wesley's direction, charged with the oversight of the work in that locality.

The Minutes of the Conference of 1765, the first that was held in Manchester, contain the following list of these Circuits, with the assistants and other preachers appointed to them.

"1. London: John Jones, W. Pennington, R. Lucas, William Darney.

"2. Sussex: Daniel Bumstead, Mark Davis.

"3. Canterbury: W. Bramah,* John Morley.

* This preacher, who had been called out into the itinerant work from the town of Sheffield, had been stationed at Redruth in 1764. He left his wife at the former place, and went to his appointment. But the zeal and energy of the wife equalled that of her husband: she sold her house-

"4. COLCHESTER: John Brandon.
"5. NORWICH: John Easton, James Clough.
"6. BEDFORD: John Cattermole.
"7. OXFORDSHIRE: Thomas Tobias.
"8. WILTS: Richard Henderson, John Slocomb, Richard Walsh, Thomas Simpson.
"9. BRISTOL: John Helton, John Gibbs.
"10. DEVON: George Roe, John Oldham, William Freemantle.
"11. CORNWALL, EAST: George Story, James Cotty, Thomas Carlill. CORNWALL, WEST: John Furz, John Mason, William Ellis.
"12. STAFFORDSHIRE: T. Hanson, William Orp, James Glazebrook.
"13. SALOP: Alexander Mather, William Minethorp.
"14. LANCASHIRE: James Oddie, John Oliver, John Murray, Isaac Waldron.
"15. DERBYSHIRE: Robert Roberts, John Shaw, Joseph Guilford.

hold furniture, and travelled on foot from Sheffield to Redruth. When she came near that town, she met an ill-looking man, who asked alms: fearing he had some bad design, she gave him half-a-crown, all the money she had left, and went on her journey. She saw no more of the man, but soon after found 2*s.* 6*d.* on the road. On arriving, she inquired for the Methodists, and, being directed to the chapel, found her husband at a prayer-meeting, where he was startled at her loud responses, not having received any intimation of her journey. They met after the service; but he had no home to which to take her, no provision having been made for a preacher's wife. She, however, found some lodgings, and entered upon such a course of usefulness as she had been accustomed to in Sheffield, visiting and praying with the people from house to house, gathering up backsliders, and visiting the sick. This conduct impressed the friends so favourably respecting her, that they met, and, each giving some article of furniture which could be spared, a house was provided and furnished, and the preacher and his wife went on their way, zealously devoting themselves to the service of God.

"16. Sheffield: Peter Jaco, Paul Greenwood.
"17. Epworth: Thomas Lee, T. Brisco, James Longbotham.
"18. Grimsby: Richard Boardman, John Pool, Samuel Woodcock.
"19. Leeds: Thomas Hanby, John Nelson.
"20. Birstal: John Murlin, Parson Greenwood, John Pawson.
"21. Haworth: Isaac Brown, John Atlay, Nicholas Manners, James Stephens, Robert Costerdine.
"22. York: T. Johnson, T. Mitchel, George Hudson.
"23. Yarm: Jacob Rowell, James Kershaw, James Brownfield.
"24. The Dales: T. Rankin, John Ellis, Jeremiah Robertshaw.
"25. Newcastle: Joseph Cownley, Christopher Hopper, Matthew Lowes, Moseley Cheek.
"26. Edinburgh: Thomas Taylor.
"27. Dundee: William Whitwell.
"28. Aberdeen: Joseph Thompson.
"29. Glasgow: Thomas Olivers.
"30. Glamorganshire: Martin Rodda.
"31. Pembroke: Thomas Newell.
"32. Dublin: William Thompson, John Morgan.
"33. Cork: R. Swindells, S. Levick, Barnabas Thomas.
"34. Limerick: James Dempster, Thomas Roorke.
"35. Waterford: John Dillon, T. Brisco.
"36. Athlone: T. Westall, John Heslup, John Whitehead.
"37. Castlebar: R. Blackwell.
"38. Newry: James Rea.
"39. Londonderry: John Johnson."

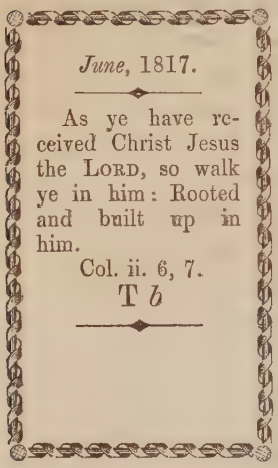
From these appointments it appears that there were at

this time ninety-two itinerant preachers. Seventy-one were appointed to twenty-five Circuits in England; four to four Circuits in Scotland; two to two Circuits in Wales; and fifteen to eight Circuits in Ireland. So that, in the two years which had elapsed since 1763, the Circuits in England had increased from twenty to twenty-five; in Ireland from seven to eight; in Scotland from two to four; while Wales remained as before, divided into two Circuits, the respective heads of which were Glamorganshire and Pembroke.

Transactions of this Conference. Society tickets.

In the conversations reported in these "Minutes" are some very important matters. We have an account of the first provision made for preachers whose age or infirmities prevented their discharging the duties of the office, and thus compelled them to retire from active service: the basis of the fund at this time was an annual subscription of half a guinea from each of the "travelling preachers." It was resolved to send a person through the country to examine the chapel deeds, and to appoint new trustees where it was necessary. An arrangement was also made for giving to members removing from one place to another a note of removal, signed by the assistant, by which means they would be accredited as members of Society in any place in which they settled. This measure suggested another important change; namely, the giving a ticket of the same kind and form to all members of Society in all places. There is much obscurity resting on the origin of the Methodist Society ticket. Whether such tokens were given to the members of Dr. Woodward's Societies, has not been satisfactorily ascertained; but it is very probable, especially as one of the tickets in the engraving was given near Penzance in 1739. This supposition is also supported by the fact, that no time appears to have elapsed from the formation of the Methodist Societies to the adoption and

use of tickets. These, as will be seen from a selection given in the accompanying plate, were very diverse, not only in their form and size, but also in their style: some were plain, while others were respectable specimens of art at that period. This diversity was now done away, and a simple uniform ticket, like that in the margin, was adopted and supplied to all the Societies. The date and a portion of Scripture were printed, and the preacher wrote the member's name below, frequently adding his own initials. One of the old tickets has a peculiar appearance. Under a heading, which consists of a text of Scripture, there are four lines drawn, beginning with "Jan. 1, 1755," "Apr. 2, 1755," "July 2," and "Octo. 1," respectively. When this ticket was given, the preacher wrote the name of the member in the first line; after the expiration of a quarter the member again presented the ticket, and so on. In this case the member appears to have been absent from the visitation in July, and was either married, or the ticket passed to another person in October; for the name is changed from Wright to Gilbert. Yet, perhaps the latter name is that of the preacher who renewed the ticket; a conjecture which is rendered the more probable by the fact of there having been one of that name on the Circuit at the time.



The origin and object of Methodism.

Another important question was raised at this Conference, which with its answer is worthy of being placed on record:—"*Q.* What was the rise of Methodism, so called? *A.* In 1729, my brother and I read the Bible; saw inward

Jan 1 39

John George

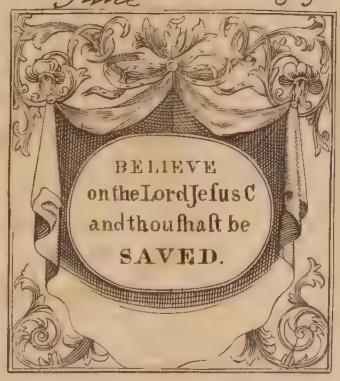
July 1763

Jno George

Luke the 17. v. 5. Lord, increase our Faith.
Jan 1 1755. Mary Wright
Apr. 2. 55 Mary Wright
July 2.
Octo. 1. Agathur

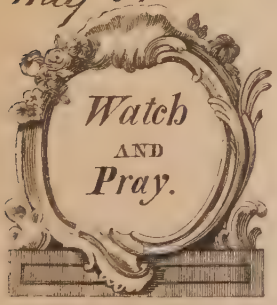
Henry Cruso

June 65



Jone Wright

May 1760

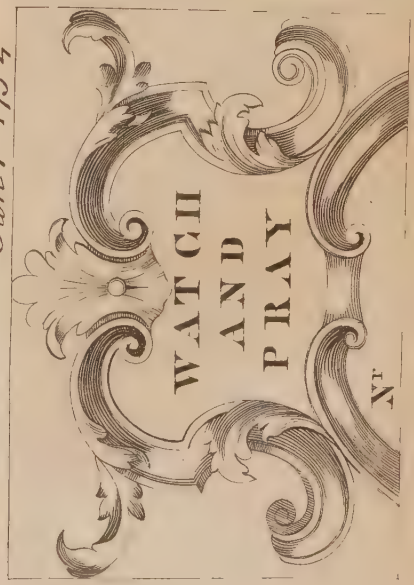


John George

Oct 14 64

Mary Heart

Jan 9 1754



Mary Hart

and outward *holiness* therein; followed after it, and incited others so to do. In 1737, we saw 'this holiness comes by *faith*.' In 1738, we saw 'we must be *justified* before we are sanctified.' But still holiness was our point, inward and outward holiness. God then thrust us out, utterly against our will, to raise a *holy* people. When Satan could no otherwise prevent this, he threw *Calvinism* in our way; and then *Antinomianism*, which struck at the root both of inward and outward *holiness*. Then many Methodists grew *rich*, and thereby *lovers* of this present *world*. Next they married unawakened or half-awakened wives, and conversed with *their relations*. Hence worldly *prudence, maxims, customs*, crept back upon us, producing more and more *conformity to the world*. There followed gross neglect of *relative duties*, especially education of children. This is not cured by the preachers. Either they have not *light* or not *weight* enough. But the want of these may be in some measure supplied, by publicly reading the Sermons everywhere; especially the fourth volume, which supplies them with remedies suited to the disease." *

This extract clearly shows the simple object of Wesley. Whatever difference of opinion may obtain as to some of the remarks made on the causes of declension, none whatever can exist as to the nature and vocation of Methodism, according to the judgment of its founder. It was not a mere organization, although this was not entirely overlooked:—not an embodiment of any particular doctrines, although this was felt to be all-important. It was essentially a means of producing inward and outward holiness. Where this point was secured, Wesley's object was attained. When this was not realized, whatever numbers, riches, or respectability might be gained, his grand design was defeated.

* "Minutes," vol. i., p. 50.

These "Minutes" closed with an earnest condemnation of the use of tobacco, snuff, and drams, and a powerful exhortation to the cultivation of a deeper and more spiritual piety than generally obtained, enjoining "all believers to go on to perfection."

During this year, Alexander Coates died at Newcastle-upon-Tyne. He was the oldest preacher in the Connexion, and a man eminent for piety and ministerial abilities. His death was full of peace and triumph.

Methodism introduced into Pontefract.

Methodism was introduced into Pontefract, principally, it is said, through the kind efforts of the Rev. Mr. Buckley, then curate, but afterward vicar of Kippax. He was serving under the Rev. Mr. Crooke, perpetual curate of Hunslet, near Leeds, whose noble sentiments and not less noble efforts on behalf of evangelical religion have been previously noticed. Mr. Buckley, probably under the influence of Mr. Crooke, much wished to procure for the Methodist preachers access to Pontefract. He accordingly prevailed upon a good man, John Shepherd, an acquaintance of his, to go and reside in that town, and to invite the Methodists to his house. They came accordingly, the Gospel was preached, a Society formed, and in 1789 a chapel built, after which the word was crowned with very great success.

Thomas Hanby at this time was appointed to Leeds. He was a native of Barnard Castle, and had been brought to a knowledge of salvation through the instrumentality of a poor shoemaker, who used to collect his acquaintances together whenever he could in the evenings, for friendly conversation on the things of God. Hanby was by trade a painter, and, lacking employment at Barnard Castle, went to Leeds, where he found work, and became an inmate in the family of Richard Wilkinson, a local preacher, who

frequently took him to his country appointments: the result was, that Hanby, being suddenly and deeply convinced that it was his duty, began to preach, and was sent to itinerate in Birmingham in 1754, and in the following year in Leeds, where he was again appointed in 1765.*

Travels and labours of Wesley this year.

As it seems necessary, in order to convey any accurate idea of the man and his work, to give a sort of itinerary of some portion of Wesley's career, this year has been selected for the purpose, as affording a fair view of his course of labour, as far as detailed in his Journals.†

In referring to this sketch, it should be observed, that it supplies but a very meagre outline of his journeys and labours during the year. It does not by any means profess to specify all the sermons preached by him during this period; and it is probable that not half of them are alluded to. Nor does it make any reference to his vast literary productions, or to his incessant and multifarious correspondence; and it gives but a very occasional and incidental allusion to his constant care and labour in watching over the preachers and people. Yet, imperfect and defective

* At his second appointment, Hanby found that the old chapel had never been painted, and, not having forgotten his trade, he thought it might here be turned to account; so he proposed to the trustees, that if they would pay for the paints, and for the time of John Miers the chapel-keeper to assist him, he would paint the chapel. This they agreed to, and he did it: stripping off his coat, and wearing his wife's apron, he worked all the time he could spare from his preaching duties, until it was done. He also taught Miers the art of making oil-cloth, then termed "oil-case," and much used for covering hats and cloaks, by which means Miers carried on a large trade and accumulated respectable property. We learn incidentally that there was at this time one, and but one, umbrella in Leeds, and that this was used to protect the clergyman whilst reading the burial service in wet weather. It was imported from abroad, was very large, and the stick of it was thicker than that of a broom.

† See Appendix D, at the end of this volume.

as it is, it shows, as nothing else can show, the unwearied diligence with which he prosecuted his grand design of promoting the glory of God in the salvation of men. Nor must it be forgotten, that at this time he was in his sixty-third year. The reader who wishes to form a just idea of his work, will do well to bear the general features of this outline in his mind, and to apply them to what is said of Wesley's proceedings in the following years; for he continued the same course, and acted on the same plan, to the end.

The cause of the progress of Methodism.

This mere chronicle of events not only exhibits him in his work, but also conveys to the reader, more effectively than anything else could do, the true cause of the progress of Methodism. Persecuted and opposed, it prospered. With a ministry drawn, to a great extent, from the unlettered classes, many of them having little experience of human life, the process of evangelization continued. Believers were built up into a living Church in every part of the land. Is the cause of these marvels inquired into? It is found in Wesley's indefatigable course of labour. Here is a man of learning and experience, of the most consummate tact and soundness of judgment,—a man with the heart of an apostle and the spirit of a hero, and withal endowed with almost superhuman powers of endurance. He has the whole field of vision under his own eye. From the Land's End to the north of Scotland he visits every locality, alternating his journeys so as to give every place the benefit of his personal inspection and oversight. Never, indeed, was an appellation more deservedly awarded than when this great Connexion was called "Wesleyan Methodist." It is not a discovery of hidden laws, like that of Newton, or the excogitation of a new *modus operandi*, like Bacon's, for which the world is indebted to Wesley. By

a long-continued course of evangelical labour, by incessant travel,—resulting in advantages which would scarcely have been exceeded had he been ubiquitous,—he succeeded in impressing on the thousands of the United Societies a large measure of his own clear theological views, his earnest godly zeal, and a strong conviction of the duty and importance of a steady, systematic aggression on all formality and wickedness.

Let the labours of this year be regarded as a type of his course of action for more than half a century; and let it be remembered that he had, in all the districts which he visited, a strong auxiliary band, every one of whom had been converted to God, and had been thrust out to labour, and suffer, and live, to promote the cause of Christ; and we shall then have some idea of the agency under which Methodism grew into prominence and power. It will be impossible to comprehend the course pursued, or the effects realized, without keeping these facts in mind. It is competent to every one to consider the continued progress of the body as the best means of testing these representations, and proving or disproving the purity and efficiency of these original Methodist agencies.

The following pages will afford many illustrations of their operation in the efforts of the preachers whom Wesley successively sent into the work. One such case may be given here. Thomas Taylor was a native of Yorkshire. His parents were Presbyterians, and in respectable circumstances. Thomas, after having gone on for some time recklessly in a course of sin, was converted at an early age. He soon afterward began to preach, was received as an itinerant, and first appointed to travel in Wales, where he was persecuted, but useful: then he was sent to Castlebar

in Ireland; and at the Conference of 1765 to Scotland. According to the "Minutes," Thomas Olivers was stationed at Glasgow, and Thomas Taylor at Edinburgh. But, in a sketch of his life, Mr. Olivers says, "At the Manchester Conference I was appointed to Scotland. The two years I tarried here I spent in and about Edinburgh, Aberdeen, and Dundee;" * while Mr. Taylor says his "destination was to Glasgow." † His own account of his entering upon the work in this Circuit shows how Methodism was introduced into that city. He says, "When I arrived, I entered on a scene which I had never witnessed before. The winter was at hand; I was in a strange land. There was no Society, no place of entertainment, no place to preach in, no friend to communicate my mind to. I took a private lodging, and gave out that I should preach on the Green, a place of public resort, hard by the city. A table was carried to the place, and at the appointed time I went, and found two bakers' boys and two women waiting. My very soul sunk within me. I had travelled by land and by water near six hundred miles to this place; and behold my congregation! I turned upon my heel to go away. No one can tell but they who have experienced it, what a task it is to stand in the open air and preach to nobody; more especially in such a place as Glasgow. However, at length I mounted my table and began the singing, which I had entirely to myself. A few more kept creeping together, all seemingly very poor people, till at length I had about two hundred hearers. But this was poor encouragement. The night following I had a more promising congregation; yet nothing to what I expected. The third night we had heavy rain. This quite cast me

Methodism introduced into Glasgow.

* "Lives of the Early Methodist Preachers," vol. i., p. 159.

† *Ibid.*, vol. ii., p. 353.

down again. O what a day of distress was that! The enemy assaulted me sorely, so that I was ready to cry out, 'It is better for me to die than to live.' But God pitied my weakness. The next day cleared up, and I was never prevented from preaching out of doors for eleven or twelve weeks after.

"On the Saturday evening I had a large congregation, and on Sunday morning a larger; but such an one on Sunday evening as I do not remember ever seeing before, excepting one. I mounted my table, but was quite too low. I set a chair upon it, but was quite too low still. I then mounted upon a high wall, and cried aloud, 'The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God; and they that hear shall live.' All was still as night, so that I conceived great hopes of this opportunity. But when I had done, they made a lane for me to walk through the huge multitude, while they stood staring at me; but no one said, 'Where dwellest thou?' I walked home much dejected."

A new edition of "The Eleven Letters," ascribed to Mr. Hervey, with a preface by a minister of Edinburgh, was just then published, which increased the prejudice of the Scotch against Methodism. Nevertheless, Mr. Taylor went on "preaching night and morning, when opportunity offered;" and, as winter was approaching, he made many efforts to procure a place to preach in, but for a long time without success. Meanwhile his resources were being rapidly exhausted. He sold his horse, but spared three guineas of the money to help a brother preacher on his way to Ireland. He says, "This brought my stock into a small compass; and, having everything to pay for, I was reduced to a short allowance. I paid three shillings a week for my room, fire, and attendance; but I

really kept a very poor house. I confess that I never kept so many fast-days before or since. But how to keep up my credit was a difficulty: for I was afraid my landlady would think me poor or covetous. I frequently desired her not to provide anything for dinner; and a little before noon I dressed myself and walked out, till after dinner, and then came home to my hungry room, with a hungry belly. However, she thought I had dined out somewhere; so I saved my credit." *

During this time he was offered a church in Glasgow, with £140 *per annum;* but he refused the tempting offer, obtained a place to preach in, and formed a Society. Its members at length inquired how their minister lived, whether he had an estate of his own, or received supplies from England; and on learning that neither was the case, and being informed of the usage of Methodism, they willingly contributed according to their means. Thus he laboured on, until he left them, in the middle of April, having formed a society of seventy members.

Conference of 1766. Reasons for continued adhesion to the Church.

The twenty-third annual Conference was held in Leeds, August 12th, 1766. Wesley wrote respecting it, "A happier one we never had, nor a more profitable one. It was both begun and ended in love, and with a solemn sense of the presence of God."

At this Conference, for the first time, the initials of the preachers who had ceased to labour as itinerants were inserted in the "Minutes." It was done in this manner: "*Q.* What preachers are laid aside this year? *A.* J—— B——, and J—— M——."

No important alterations took place in respect of the Circuits. Their number the preceding year was thirty-

* "Lives of the Early Methodist Preachers," vol. ii., p. 357.

nine; this year it was forty. But then, in the former case, East and West Cornwall were numbered as one Circuit; in the latter they are numbered as two. The other alterations are these: 1765 had No. 13, Salop; this in 1766 is changed to Cheshire. In 1765 we find Nos. 17 and 18, Epworth and Grimsby; in 1766 we have, instead, Lincolnshire East, and Lincolnshire West. In 1765 Scotland was divided into four Circuits; in 1766 it had five, by the addition of Dunbar as No. 27. But then the Principality, which in 1765 had two Circuits under the names of "Glamorgan and Pembroke," had only one, under the appellation of "Wales," with only two preachers.

Two questions of vital importance were raised at this Conference, and discussed at some length. They appear to be very different in their nature, but were, nevertheless, in Wesley's judgment, not very remotely connected. They respected the continued adhesion of the Methodists to the Church, and the power exercised over the Societies by their founder. The first was raised by the inquiry, "*Q.* Are we not then Dissenters? *A.* We are irregular; 1. By calling sinners to repentance in all places of God's dominion. 2. By frequently using *extemporary prayer.* Yet we are not *Dissenters* in the only sense which our law acknowledges; namely, persons who believe it is sinful to attend the service of the Church: for we do attend it at all opportunities. We will not, dare not, separate from the Church, for the reasons given several years ago. We are not *seceders,* nor do we bear any resemblance to them. We set out upon quite opposite principles. The seceders laid the very foundation of their work in judging and condemning *others.* We laid the foundation of our work in judging and condemning *ourselves.* They begin everywhere with showing their hearers how fallen *the Church* and *ministers*

are. We begin everywhere with showing our hearers how fallen they are *themselves*.

"And as we are not Dissenters from the Church, so we will do nothing willingly which tends to a separation from it. Therefore, let every assistant so order his Circuit, that no preacher may be hindered from attending the church more than two Sundays in the month. Never make light of going to church, either by word or deed...But some may say, 'Our own service is public worship.' Yes, *in a sense;* but not such as supersedes the Church service. We never designed it should. We have a hundred times professed the contrary. It pre-supposes public prayer, like the sermons at the University. Therefore, I have over and over advised, Use no long prayer, either before or after sermon. Therefore I myself frequently use only a collect, and never enlarge in prayer, unless at intercession, or on a watch-night, or some extraordinary occasion.

"If it were designed to be instead of Church service, it would be essentially defective. For it seldom has the four grand parts of public prayer,—deprecation, petition, intercession, and thanksgiving. Neither is it, even on the Lord's day, concluded with the Lord's Supper.

"The hour for it on that day, unless where there is some peculiar reason for a variation, should be five in the morning, as well as five in the evening. Why should we make God's day the shortest of the seven?

"But if the people put ours in the place of the Church service, we *hurt* them that stay with us, and *ruin* them that leave us. For then they will go nowhere, but lounge the Sabbath away without any public worship at all. I advise, therefore, all the Methodists in England and Ireland who have been brought up in the Church, constantly

to attend the service of the Church, at least every Lord's day." *

We see here precisely the position which Wesley intended the Methodist Societies to occupy, and the manner in which their religious services were to be regarded in relation to those of the Church. Fully assured of the divine vocation of Methodism, and that his preachers were called of God to the work in which they were engaged, he nevertheless did not intend that the religious worship conducted in the Methodist chapels should be regarded as superseding the necessity of attending worship in the Established churches. On the contrary, he assures us that he designedly adapted the Methodist services for the spiritual instruction and edification of those who were presupposed in other parts of the day to attend worship and participate in the full service of prayer in the church. It is necessary here to note the important bearing of these views on the purity and religious efficiency of Methodism in the early part of its history.

Effect of this decision on the character of the body.

The evil tendency of the errors and pompous rites retained in the Establishment at the time of the Reformation, and the importance of the vital truth held by the Puritans and manifested by their testimony, have been fully recognised in the preceding pages. But this does not prevent our entertaining a strong conviction that the beneficial effects which ought to have resulted from the latter, were seriously lessened by the avowed antagonism of many of the Presbyterian party to the Established Church. With a great preponderance of truth, there was a spirit of bitterness and hostility toward the National Establishment, which fearfully deteriorated the godly

* "Minutes of the Methodist Conference," Octavo Edition, 1812, vol. i., p. 58.

character of the early opponents of episcopacy and liturgies.

Methodists of the present day may be allowed to differ in opinion as to whether the religious services of the early Methodists ought not to have been regarded, in a strict and proper sense, as public worship. Yet it is very evident that Wesley's general views and decisions as to the points referred to in the extract quoted above, were providentially overruled, so as to produce the most beneficial effects on the character of Methodism. His determined adherence to the Church prevented his followers from indulging in that spirit which had wrought so much evil to the religious people of former days, and, moreover, became a strong incentive to holiness. The judgment and spirit of the founder were, more or less, impressed on all his preachers; and they generally, at least, urged it on their numerous members and hearers. Methodism, therefore, grew up, not as a rival Church or sect, but as an humble agent, charged with the important mission of spreading scriptural holiness throughout the land. Under this influence the character of the body was formed. And it is not too much to say, that such a character could not have been formed under any other influence. When a religious community starts into being in the spirit of hostility to any other religious body, it bears the plague-spot of corruption on the very principle of its existence.

The power exercised by Wesley questioned, and defended.

The other question to which reference has been made, respected the measure of power exercised by Wesley over the preachers and the Societies. In answering this question, the Minute before us recapitulates the origin of the Societies, and of the several offices sustained in them; and clearly shows, that all this organization took place and grew

up into existence, not at Wesley's request, nor for his benefit, but at the request and for the advantage of others. Persons came to him, and entreated him to give them religious counsel: he consented; and they thus became members of his Society. Some of these declared their conviction that God had called them to preach, and asked to be allowed to assist him as his sons in the Gospel: he accepted them, and appointed them their work; thus they became preachers: and so of stewards, and other officers. He therefore maintains that he ought not, in consequence of the extent to which this had been carried, to be subjected to the direction and control of the persons who had thus sought connexion with him; but that on the contrary, as the terms of this connexion were purely voluntary, those persons were bound, as long as they continued in union with him, to remain so on the terms of the original compact; namely, that they should act under his direction. He accordingly declared, that he neither loved nor desired the exercise of this power, but that he regarded it as a part of the burden which he was providentially called upon to bear.

There cannot be a doubt as to the logical conclusiveness of Wesley's argument. Those who, as a favour to themselves, sought connexion with him and employment under him, had clearly no right whatever to arrogate a power to direct his action, or to control his judgment. But there can also be no doubt, that Wesley had other reasons, besides the bare abstract propriety of the thing, for insisting on this course. He saw that the concession required—namely, "a free Conference, wherein all things shall be determined by most votes"—would be fatal to the continued adhesion of Methodism to the Church. No teaching or influence brought to bear on lay preachers, could possibly give them the judgment and feeling towards

the Establishment which were cherished by the Wesleys. The founder of Methodism knew this, and saw the possibility of such an alteration after he was removed. "After my death," he observes in those "Minutes," "something of this kind may take place; but not while I live." He felt bound to use the influence and power which Providence had placed in his hands, to maintain Methodism in its original relation to the Church. And this measure greatly conserved its evangelical and religious character.

A clear proof that Wesley's heart was set on the means of promoting inward and outward holiness, and on making his Societies more than ever aggressive on all sin and formality, is found in the fact, that, having at this Conference discussed these two important questions,—the relation of Methodism to the Church, and the power exercised by himself,—he proceeds in the "Minutes" to say, "But all hitherto is comparatively little. I come now to speak of greater things." He then through five or six pages insists that personal religion both among preachers and people was too superficial; and by argument and exhortation urges all to a higher state of holiness, and a more devoted zeal in the service of God.

The "Minutes" further state that Wesley afterward proceeded to insist on his preachers being more *knowing*. Nothing can exceed the strong and nervous terms in which this is enforced. He says the cause of the smallness of their knowledge was their idleness. And he affirms, "We must, absolutely must, cure this evil, or give up the whole work." This language, however, should not be construed into any severe reflection on the preachers of that day: few men now will dare to call them idle. But Wesley was indefatigable and laborious beyond example, and he was entitled to use language which few others could

suitably employ. The "Minutes" of this year must have had a very important effect on the character of Methodism, and well deserve the careful attention of Methodists of all ages and countries.

Malignant persecution.

It is exceedingly difficult to convey any adequate idea of the malignity with which the active Methodists of this time were frequently persecuted, of the meek and patient bearing with which they submitted to the most violent outrage, or of the remarkable manner in which Providence sometimes threw its shield over the innocent sufferers, and at others no less signally punished the entertainers of murderous purposes and passions.

One instance, which occurred about this time, may be mentioned. Blakey Spencer was a poor man who lived at Skircoat Green, near Halifax. His curiosity was so excited by the accounts which he heard of John Nelson, that he went over to Birstal to hear him preach. He felt so interested and pleased with what he heard, that he invited him to come to his house at Skircoat Green, and preach there. Nelson complied, and thus Methodist preaching was introduced into this part of Yorkshire, and Spencer and many others were brought to the experience of salvation.

Having, for some years, maintained an unblemished Christian character, and evinced an intense desire for the salvation of his fellow men, he became a very active and useful local preacher. In the discharge of the duties of this office, he not only employed his talents in his immediate neighbourhood, but pushed forth his exertions into different parts of the surrounding district,—"into nooks and corners where lived a race of beings uncultivated as the soil they trod, and rugged as the mountain fastnesses they inhabited. Careless of his welfare, this zealous

champion reared the standard of the Cross, and preached the name of Jesus with undaunted fortitude, and, even amid hot persecution, with unabated zeal. In the neighbourhood of Ripponden and Stirk Bridge, Blakey Spencer had more than once been mobbed and pelted with stones. About the period of which we are now writing, he had been preaching near the latter place, when the people showed, by their hostile movements, a determination to execute a threat they had before uttered. He endeavoured to evade their grasp, and succeeded for a while in outstripping his pursuers; but, his strength failing, they pounced like vultures on their prey. Rough treatment ensued; and it will give a glimpse of the depravity and semi-barbarism of the neighbourhood, when it is stated that this mob was composed alike of women and men. Not content with the base and cruel treatment of which he was the subject, they threw him upon the ground, and dragged him to the edge of the rivulet, a short space above Sowerby Bridge. The stream being at that time much swollen, the waters dashed along their channel with hoarse and lofty murmurs; and just opposite the spot where the mob had dragged their victim, was one of those eddies which are caused by a sand-hole in the bed of the stream. The rushing and whirling of the waters creamed the surface with foam, and, pointing to the whirlpool, a *woman,* who lived hard by, and who had shown herself more vociferous than the rest, shouted with maddening fury, 'In with him! drown him, drown him!' The mob would have seized poor Spencer, to put in force this hellish mandate; but such had already been their brutal usage, that he lay senseless on the ground. They saw his state, and left him for dead, and the woman's thirst for his blood remained unsated. The poor sufferer lay for a considerable time insensible, but, recovering with great

difficulty, and enduring intense pain, crawled home. The sequel must be told.

"Within a few days after this occurrence, the woman previously noticed was standing on the edge of the rivulet, where she had come to wash her mop. Holding it by the extremity of the handle, she was cleansing it in the eddy, when by the force of the stream it was sucked in; the woman herself was drawn after, for a few moments she was whirled in the pool, and, when taken out of the waters, her spirit had fled to appear before that God who has declared He 'will avenge the blood of His servants, and will render vengeance to His adversaries!'" *

Methodism introduced into Winchester.

This year, as far as can be ascertained, Wesley preached for the first time in the city of Winchester. Methodism had been introduced into that place by the efforts of a young man named Jasper Winscom. Having been led to adopt the doctrines of Wesley from reading some books which his wife possessed, he felt very anxious to invite the preachers to visit Winchester; but the Church interest was so very prevalent there, that several attempts were made before any sermon was delivered. In the summer of 1763, Winscom met a Methodist preacher, William Minethorpe, at Romsey. What brought him there cannot now be ascertained: probably he was stationed that year on the Wiltshire Circuit, and was travelling for the purpose of extending the Gospel in that direction. However, Winscom invited him to come to Winchester, which he did in the following week, and preached in a summer-house belonging to Winscom's mother-in-law. This place would contain about twenty persons; how many were present on this occasion, is not known; but the preaching was continued once a fortnight in this summer-house until the

* WALKER'S "Methodism in Halifax."

following May, and a class was formed, consisting of four members, of which Jasper was the leader.

This soon attracted attention, and, as the Methodists had no Sunday service, the Dissenters invited them to worship at their chapel. This was declined, the little band preferring to meet for prayer and to read a sermon among themselves on Sabbath evenings, and to go to church in the mornings. This line of conduct, however, brought Winscom into great perplexity. Opposed by both Church people and Dissenters, his business fell off, and he was led to contemplate the necessity of removing to another town. Soon afterward, however, a Dissenter, who had kept a shop similar to Winscom's in the ironmongery trade, died; he was enabled to unite the trade of both establishments, and his embarrassments were removed. The Methodist cause advanced slowly: after two years the class numbered but twelve, and we cannot learn that it was larger when Wesley preached in Winchester in 1766.

Conference of 1767.

The twenty-fourth annual Conference was held in London, and began on Tuesday, August 18th, 1767. Of it Wesley says, "I met in Conference with our assistants and a select number of preachers. To these were added on Thursday and Friday, Mr. Whitefield, Howel Harris, and many stewards and local preachers. Love and harmony reigned from the beginning to the end; but we have all need of more love and holiness, and, in order thereto, of crying continually, 'Lord, increase our faith.'" *

These "Minutes" afford a tolerably complete summary of Methodist statistics. The following shows the number of Circuits, preachers, and members:—

* Wesley's "Journal," under the date.

	Circuits.	Preachers.	Members.
In England	26	75	22,410
„ Ireland	9	19	2,801
„ Scotland	5	7	468
„ Wales	1	3	232
Totals	41	104	25,911

being an increase on the year of one Circuit, and six preachers. As this is the first time in which we have a complete list of the members, no comparison can be made in this respect with the preceding year.

The "Minutes" of this Conference are not remarkable for any important enactments. The Wednesbury Trustees having expressed some apprehension lest one preacher might be appointed to them for many years, it was agreed to insert in the deed the following clause: "Provided that the same preacher shall not be sent, ordinarily above one, never above two years together." The following minute is eminently *Wesleyan:* "How may the books be spread more? *A.* Let every assistant give them away prudently, and beg money of the rich to buy books for the poor." Other minutes of this Conference are directed against the practice of smuggling, and of bribery at elections.

Revival at Kingswood.

During this year a very gracious work appeared among the boys at Kingswood School. Wesley had laboured for nothing more earnestly than to make this a thoroughly religious educational establishment. In his efforts to promote this object, he had met with many and grievous disappointments. But at last it seemed as if his prayers were to be answered, and his labour crowned with success. The following is an extract of a letter from one of the masters

to Wesley, dated "April 27th, 1768." "On Wednesday, the 20th, God broke in upon our boys in a surprising manner. A serious concern has been observable in some of them for some time past; but that night, while they were in their private apartments, the power of God came upon them like a mighty, rushing wind, which made them cry aloud for mercy. Last night, I hope, will never be forgotten, when about twenty were in the utmost distress. But God quickly spoke peace to two of them. A greater display of His love I never saw; they indeed rejoice with joy unspeakable. For my own part, I have not often felt the like power. We have no need to exhort them to pray, for that spirit runs through the whole school; so that this house may well be called 'an house of prayer.' While I am writing, the cries of the boys from their several apartments are sounding in my ears."

Another letter, a few days after, says, "I cannot help congratulating you on the happy situation of your family here. The power of God continues to work with almost irresistible force; and there is good reason to hope it will not be withdrawn, till every soul is converted to God."

And a third letter, under date "May 18th," relates, "The work of God still goes on at Kingswood. Of the one hundred and thirty members who have been added to the Society since the last Conference, the greater part have received justifying faith, and are still rejoicing in God their Saviour; and (what is most remarkable) I do not know of one backslider in the place. The outpouring of the Spirit on the children of the School has been exceeding great." *

One of the instruments of this revival was John Murlin. He was a native of St. Stephen's, Cornwall, and was converted to God about April, 1749; he soon afterward

* Wesley's "Journal," May 6th, 1768.

became the leader of a class and a local preacher, and was called into the itinerant work at the Conference of 1754. After labouring in various parts of Great Britain and Ireland, he was appointed to Bristol in 1767, as "assistant," with Peter Price as his colleague. He says of this extraordinary work, "There was this year a very remarkable increase of the work of God in Kingswood. Above an hundred and sixty members were added to the Society; and thirteen or fourteen children in the School were enabled to rejoice in God their Saviour."

Expulsion of six students from Oxford.

An event took place about this time at Oxford, which, although resulting from a strong antipathy to Methodism, issued in giving an impetus to the work. This was the expulsion from the University of six young students, "for holding Methodistical tenets, and taking upon them to pray, read and expound the Scriptures, and sing hymns, in a private house." The principal of their college, the Rev. Dr. Dixon, defended their doctrines from the thirty-nine Articles of the Established Church, and spoke in the highest terms of their piety, and the exemplariness of their lives. But his motion was overruled, and the accused were, by the visitatorial power of the vice-chancellor and his associates, formally expelled.

Dr. Dixon then, as one of the heads of houses present, suggested that, as these young men were expelled for having too much religion, it would be very proper to inquire into the conduct of some who had too little. The only answer given to this proposal was, by the vice-chancellor thanking the person who had preferred the accusation against these young men, and telling him that "the University was obliged to him for his good work."

These young men did not unite with Wesley after their expulsion, but their case was brought before the public in

connexion with Methodism by a very pungent satirical sermon called "The Shaver." The author of this production was Mr. John MacGowan, previously noticed; and "this piece of his," Mr. Myles says, "furthered the cause of Methodism, and removed the prejudice which many had against lay preachers."

The town of Leeds was much interested and excited at this time by the novel circumstance of a captain in the army preaching in the Methodist chapel. This was a Captain Scott. The regiment to which he belonged being quartered in Leeds for about a week, the captain, who was a pious man and a good preacher, occupied the pulpit on the afternoons of two market-days. Multitudes were attracted by the strange sight; and some were awakened, and brought to God.

Conference of 1768. Preachers forbidden to carry on trade.

The twenty-fifth annual Conference was held in Bristol, and began August 16th, 1768. Wesley's only remark respecting it in his "Journal" is, "O what can we do for more labourers? We can only cry to the Lord of the harvest."

The work at this time seems to have made but little progress generally. The Circuits reported to this Conference were forty in number, the same as they were two years previously; and the number of members, 27,341, being an increase for the year of 1,430; but of this number the increase in Staffordshire alone was nearly 1,100. This induced a careful investigation into the condition of the several Societies, and especially into the circumstances of the preachers. The result of this examination was a resolution affirming the impropriety of itinerant preachers *carrying on trade*. It is certain that at this time some of them did so. And this practice cannot

be wondered at, when it is considered that they were employed as lay preachers, and had no clerical *status* or profession whatever; and, further, that the provision made for them was of the most slender kind, and scarcely contemplated the wants of wives and children. It is believed that an entry is still extant in the Society book of one of the most ancient cities of the island to this effect: "7*s.* 6*d.*, for turning the assistant preacher's coat, and making it fit the second preacher." It can excite no surprise, that able and energetic men, placed in these circumstances, should have endeavoured, by some light kind of business, to increase their income, and thus enable themselves to provide more comfortably for their families. Wesley saw all this, and the minute respecting it is based on the question, "Should itinerant preachers follow trades?" To this it was answered, "This is an important question; and as it is the first time it has come before us, it will be proper to consider it thoroughly. The question is not whether they may occasionally work with their hands, as St. Paul did; but whether it is proper for them to keep shop, and follow merchandise. Of those who do so at present, it may be observed, they are unquestionably upright men. They are men of considerable gifts. We see the fruit of their labour, and they have a large share in the esteem and love of the people. All this pleads on their side, and cannot but give us a prejudice in their favour." The minute then goes on to notice the cases of three preachers who pleaded a necessity for this kind of trading; and these Wesley, from a particular examination of each, showed not to be cases of absolute necessity. The conversation then passed on to consider whether the practice in question, namely, of preachers following trades, was not "evil in itself, and evil in its consequences." In discussing the first of these ques-

tions, a course was taken which affords important information as to the view which Wesley took of his lay assistants. He not only applies to their case those texts of Scripture which clearly refer to the right of ministers of the Gospel to temporal support, but actually quotes the Office of Ordination of the Established Church. And thus he not only claims for his preachers the same religious position as was occupied by the ministers of the Establishment, but even goes further, and adds, "We, indeed, more particularly, because God hath called us 'to provoke them to jealousy,' to supply their lack of service to the sheep that are as without shepherds, and to spend and be spent therein." * So that, although Wesley continued to regard his preachers as laymen, and declined to allow them to administer the sacraments, he did this on merely ecclesiastical, and not on strictly religious, grounds. A further proof of this is found in the defence of Wesley's conduct in reference to his connexion with the Greek bishop Erasmus, already referred to, which was written, as Mr. Myles asserts, with Wesley's consent, by Thomas Olivers. In that publication it was said, that "Mr. Wesley was connected with a number of persons who have given every proof which the nature of the thing allows, that they have an inward call to preach the Gospel. Both he and they would be glad if they had an outward call also." † It is therefore evident that Wesley regarded his preachers as truly called of God to publish the Gospel of Christ, and consequently, as being under every religious obligation to conduct themselves as persons set apart for this sacred office; although he did not regard the external call which they had received as sufficient to justify them in administer-

* "Minutes," vol. i., p. 78.

† Myles's "Chronological History," p. 76.

ing the sacraments. The issue of this conversation was, therefore, an earnest recommendation to all the preachers who had hitherto engaged in trade, "to give up all, and attend to the one business." "It is true," the minute goes on to say, "this cannot be done on a sudden; but it may between this and the next Conference." *

The state of the Societies in Cornwall led Wesley to visit that county, where he preached in peace to large congregations; but he complained that "the love of many" had become "cold." He passed on to Kingswood, preaching at Devonport, Plymouth, Axminster, and other places, in the way. Then he visited in succession Bristol, Bath, Bradford, Salisbury, Weedon, Hertford, Wycombe, Oxford, and Witney; after which he spent a Sabbath in London. He then preached at the barracks at Chatham, at Deptford, Colchester, Norwich, and again returned to London. Bristol, Stroud, Tewkesbury, Chester, were afterwards visited. On the 21st of March he embarked for Ireland, where he travelled until the 24th of July, when he returned to England. During this visit he endeavoured to heal a breach between the preachers and people at Dublin, but complains that it was but partially done.

Miss Bosanquet removes to Cross Hall, near Leeds.

In the month of June, 1768, Miss Bosanquet removed her large establishment from Leytonstone to Gildersome, near Leeds; which circumstance, from the eminent piety and gifts of this Christian lady, had a very happy effect on many of the neighbouring Societies. Soon after this removal, finding the house in which she dwelt unsuitable, she purchased an estate, on which stood a large house and very commodious premises. To this place she removed, and called it Cross Hall. Here she immediately began a

* "Minutes," vol. i., p. 78.

class-meeting; and before the necessary alterations were made, many of the work-people were converted to God. As some of these resided at a distance, she urged them to endeavour to get similar meetings in the vicinity of their respective dwellings: thus the saving knowledge of Christ and the means of grace were greatly extended.

After Miss Bosanquet had settled at Cross Hall, she "felt a powerful impression on her mind that she should visit Leeds; but she had no acquaintance there. One time, when earnestly engaged in prayer, it seemed as if some one said, 'Go to the house of Abraham Dickenson.' She obeyed, and found Mrs. Dickenson,—an eminently pious woman,—as usual, busily employed. All business was, however, laid aside, and a few pious friends quickly collected together, to participate in the enjoyment of the society of the visitor. During this interview they experienced much of the divine presence, and a gracious outpouring of the sacred influence of the Holy Spirit. From that period Miss Bosanquet continued to meet them in band once a fortnight." *

Richard Rodda begins to preach.

This year Richard Rodda, a Cornish tinner, began to preach. He had been brought to the experience of salvation some time before, and had been wonderfully preserved in many very perilous circumstances whilst pursuing his labours under ground. Although he long and stoutly fought against his convictions of duty, he was at length compelled to preach the Gospel of Christ. It is difficult to find a man, even in those days of privation, toil, and persecution, who devoted himself to the work of the ministry, and endured "hardness as a good soldier," with more zeal and firmness than Mr. Rodda.

The Society at Winchester was now increased and

* "Methodist Magazine," 1819, p. 690.

strengthened by the addition of many godly soldiers who belonged to a regiment which was at this time quartered there. These men were eminently pious and very useful.

Conference of 1769. Provision made for preachers' wives. Pecuniary means of the preachers still very inadequate.

The twenty-sixth Conference was held at Leeds, August 1st, 1769. The number of Circuits was now increased from 40 to 46; the number of members from 27,341 to 28,263. At this Conference an important discussion took place respecting a provision for preachers' wives. It was said, "Many inconveniences have arisen from the present method of providing for preachers' wives. The preachers who are most wanted in several places, cannot be sent thither because they are married; and if they are sent, the people look upon them with an evil eye, because they cannot bear the burden of their families." The question therefore arose, "How may these inconveniences be remedied?" It was resolved that the Circuits should contribute according to their means toward the support of the wives, whether married or single preachers were appointed to them. The allowance for a wife was, at this time, fixed at £10 *per annum*, and the following kind of assessment made:—London was to contribute £5 *per* quarter, or sufficient for two; Sussex, £2. 10*s.*; Salisbury, Bradford, Bristol, Devon, Cornwall East, the same; Cornwall West, £5; Manchester, Leeds, Bristol, York, Yarm, Haworth, the Dales, the same; Staffordshire, Cheshire, and Derbyshire, £2. 10*s.*; Liverpool, Sheffield, £3. 15*s.*; Lincolnshire East, £6; West, £3. 15*s.*; Bradford, £3. 15*s.*; Newcastle, £7. 10*s.* Thus a provision was made for thirty-six wives at £2. 10*s.* *per* quarter each. There were but thirty-one wives of preachers dependent on this means of support; and the surplus was ordered to be divided among those who had children, or according to their requirements.

Notwithstanding these efforts to make improved provision for the preachers, it was still very inadequate; indeed, so much so, that besides the persecution which their labours provoked, they had sometimes to endure very grievous privations. So extensively was this the case, that many who bade fair to be the brightest ornaments of the Wesleyan itinerancy, as their families increased, were driven back to business, merely to obtain the ordinary necessaries of life. The following extract from the Bradford Circuit book for 1770 is given as a specimen of the usages of the Connexion in what was then regarded as the advanced era of its financial movements:—

	£.	s.	d.
"The preacher's quarterly board, 13 weeks, at 3*s.* 6*d.*	2	5	6
The preacher's quarterage	3	0	0
Ditto ditto for the wife	1	17	6
Allowed for servant	0	12	6
Allowed for turnpikes	0	6	0
	£8	1	6"

To those not conversant with Methodistic affairs, it may be necessary to state that the sum allowed under the head of "quarterly board" was designed for the maintenance of the family; or, as it is technically entered in one page of the Society's records, "for eating." The "quarterage" was intended to meet the expense of clothing, books, &c. Less than £33 *per annum* was thus the whole income of the preacher and his family for clothing, maintenance, and other necessaries! The preacher, it is true, was much from home; provisions, too, were very considerably cheaper than at present; yet, with every allowance for these aids,

other help must have been imperatively necessary to enable a preacher and his family to live.*

This Conference, as stated above, was held in Leeds, and was noticed in the "Intelligencer" newspaper of the 8th of August in the following terms: "For a week past the Rev. Mr. John Wesley has held a kind of visitation, but what they call a Conference, in this town, with several hundreds of his preachers from most parts of Great Britain and Ireland, where he settled their several routes for the succeeding year, &c.; and after collecting a large sum of money for the purpose of sending out missionaries for America, he yesterday morning set out for Manchester." The newspaper writer evidently included the visitors and others in the number set down as preachers.

On this occasion it was reported to the Conference, "We have a pressing call from our brethren at New York to come over and help them. Who is willing to go?" It is scarcely possible to attach too much importance to this fact. The American colonies were at this time in their infancy, it is true, but beginning to put forth signs of vigour and power, a fit prelude to their future greatness.

Introduction of Methodism into America.

It should be remembered, to the credit of the sex, that the honour of introducing Methodism into America is justly due to the godly zeal of a Christian woman. In the year 1765, a vessel conveying some Irish emigrants of the better class of labourers reached New York. Among these were Philip Embury, and some members of the Methodist Society. During the following year, another body of emigrants, some of them friends and neighbours of the former, followed them to the same city, and among them an aged Christian matron. Soon after the arrival of this latter company, this lady,

* Rev. W. W. Stamp's "Methodism in Bradford," p. 55.

who was deeply concerned for the welfare of her own soul and the salvation of others, was sadly grieved to find that Embury, and the other Methodists who had been some time in America, had almost wholly given up their religious profession, and were devoting themselves to the follies and amusements of the world. At length, on one occasion, she went into a room where Embury and several others were assembled, and some of them engaged in playing a game of cards. She instantly threw the cards into the fire, reproved Embury for his unfaithfulness, and said, "You must preach to us, or we shall all go to hell together; and God will require our blood at your hands." This sharp appeal to his conscience roused the unfaithful man to a sense of duty; but, as if unwilling to yield at once to the power of truth and the dictates of his better judgment, he replied, "I cannot preach, for I have neither house nor congregation;" to which the old lady answered, "Preach in your own house, and to our own company." Unable to resist the upbraidings of his conscience and the reproofs of this mother in Israel, he consented to her request, and soon after delivered the first Methodist sermon ever preached in America, to a congregation of five persons, in "his own hired house."

Embury, being thus committed to a course of Christian duty, was useful to his hearers, his own house became too small, and a larger room was hired for their services, the rent being defrayed by voluntary contributions. As this little company were one day engaged in solemn worship in their humble sanctuary, they were surprised and disconcerted by the appearance of a British officer in full uniform. At first they feared he had come to disturb, and perhaps to prohibit, their meeting in this manner; but their fears were soon dispelled; they saw him devoutly kneel in

prayer, and participate with apparent delight in their simple worship.

Captain Webb's preaching and usefulness. Progress of Methodism in New York.

This gentleman was no other than Captain Webb, who had been converted to God under Wesley's preaching in Bristol, and employed by him as a local preacher. He was at this time on service in America, and was quartered at Albany; and, hearing there was a small Methodist Society at New York, he sought and found them.

Captain Webb was, of course, invited to preach; and, as it was then usual for officers to wear their regimentals on all occasions, he appeared in the pulpit in full uniform. This strange appearance soon attracted crowds to the Methodist meeting-house; and the earnest and heart-searching addresses of Captain Webb were the means of salvation to many souls. His position, too, as an officer and a gentleman, brought Methodism into knowledge and repute in those circles of society to which the Irish emigrants could have no access; and thus the word of the Lord was abundantly successful. After a short time the new place of worship became too small, and a large rigging loft was taken, which was fitted up as a preaching house. This room, also, in turn became too strait, and it was determined to build a chapel. Very formidable difficulties opposed the progress of this design, but they were all surmounted, and the building was finished. Mr. Embury, who was a carpenter by trade, made the pulpit with his own hands, and then, on the 30th of October, 1768, preached the first sermon in what the Society then called "Wesley Chapel." It may fairly be presumed that, common as this name has since become, this house was the original *Wesley Chapel*.

Captain Webb travelled to Long Island and other places to preach the Gospel, and Methodism was diffused over a

considerable extent of country. Embury, although now pious and zealous, and exercising as far as he could the office of a pastor, possessed humble preaching abilities; and he had to support himself by his trade. Other ministerial aid was therefore urgently needed. It happened that just as Wesley chapel was being finished, it became known that one of the emigrants recently arrived in New York was personally acquainted with Wesley. This man was accordingly requested to send a brief account of the state and prospects of the Society to England; at the same time earnestly urging Wesley to send to them "a man of wisdom, of sound faith, and a good disciplinarian." The letter concluded with these words: "With respect to money for the payment of the preacher's passage over, if they could not procure it, we would sell our coats and shirts to procure it for them."

Boardman and Pilmoor sent to America.

When this application was communicated to the Conference, two of the preachers, Richard Boardman and Joseph Pilmoor, offered themselves to go as missionaries to America. A collection was then immediately made in the Conference, and out of it £50 sent as a token of love to the brethren in New York to assist them in paying their debt, and £20 appropriated to pay the passage of the two preachers. Thus, in about four years after the first Methodist of whom we have any knowledge landed on the shores of America, two itinerant preachers appointed by Wesley in Conference were on their way to that country, to minister in a chapel which had been already built and opened for divine worship. So remarkably were the energy and rapid success of this work, at its commencement, in harmony with its subsequent amazing extension and developement, and the mighty influence it has exercised on the religious destinies of the world.

Wesley, at the Conference of 1769, had entered on his sixty-sixth year. Methodism had become extensively known and useful throughout the country; and although he steadily adhered to his original policy of keeping his people in fellowship with the Established Church, and of regarding his preachers as laymen, called in an extraordinary manner to preach the Gospel, he nevertheless felt anxious for the perpetuation of the cause which had been providentially reared up and brought into vigorous operation. With this object he read a paper to the Conference, which propounded his views on the subject. In this document he began by setting forth his great desire for the hearty and effective union of those ministers of the Church who believed and preached salvation by faith, that they might not hinder, but help, one another. He mentions the effort he made to effect this by writing to fifty or sixty of these, and its failure as already recorded, dismissing that topic with the words, "They are a rope of sand, and such they will continue." "But," he goes on to say, "it is otherwise with the *travelling preachers* in our Connexion. You are at present one body: you act in concert with each other, and by united counsels. And now is the time to consider what can be done in order to continue this union. Indeed, as long as I live, there will be no great difficulty: I am, under God, a centre of union to all our travelling as well as local preachers.

Plan for perpetuating the union of the preachers in the event of Wesley's death.

"They all know me and my communication. They all love me for my work's sake: and, therefore, were it only out of regard to me, they will continue connected with each other. But by what means may this connexion be preserved when God removes me from you?"

After declaring that no means would keep men united in this work who had not a single eye, and did not aim

solely at the glory of God and the salvation of men, the paper proceeds: "But what method can be taken, to preserve a firm union between those who choose to remain together?

"Perhaps you might take some such steps as these:—

"On notice of my death, let all the preachers in England and Ireland repair to London within six weeks.

"Let them seek God by solemn fasting and prayer.

"Let them draw up Articles of Agreement to be signed by those who choose to act in concert.

"Let those be dismissed who do not choose it, in the most friendly manner possible.

"Let them choose, by votes, a *committee* of three, five, or seven, each of them to be *moderator* in his turn.

"Let the committee do what I do now: propose preachers to be tried, admitted, excluded. Fix the place of each preacher for the ensuing year, and the time of the next Conference."

In order to prepare the way for some such arrangement as this, the following was submitted for consideration, to be afterward signed by those preachers who approved it:—

"We whose names are under-written, being thoroughly convinced of the necessity of a close union between those whom God is pleased to use as instruments in this glorious work, in order to preserve this union between ourselves, are resolved, God being our helper,

"I. *To devote ourselves entirely to God:* denying ourselves, taking up our cross daily, steadily aiming at one thing,—to save our own souls and them that hear us.

"II. To preach the *old Methodist doctrine,* and no other, contained in the 'Minutes' of the Conference.

"III. To observe and enforce the whole Methodist discipline laid down in the said 'Minutes.'"

The preachers then desired that the most material parts of the "Minutes" might be extracted, and a copy sent to each assistant, so that all the preachers might have an opportunity of carefully considering the whole subject.

This year brought William Ashman into the itinerant work. He was born at Colford, in the county of Somerset, and converted in his youth. He married when about twenty-one years of age, went into business, was appointed a leader, and Society and Circuit steward, and was rendered very useful in his neighbourhood for many years. When about thirty-four years of age, he wrote to Wesley, to let him know that he was disposed to give himself up more fully to the work of God. His reasons for this step, and his first appointment, are given in his own words, as follows:—"This was not done because I could not live at home, or for any temporal advantage; for I had a good house of my own, and an excellent business, by which I cleared fifty pounds a year, with half the labour I have had since I left home. I had also a kind father, a tender mother, a loving wife, and many friends; but I took up my cross, and a great one it was to me and my wife. We went, according to appointment, into the east of Cornwall, and with great difficulty I procured a place for her to live in. At last I agreed with Mr. Holmes, near Tavistock, to board her for so much a week." Thus the Lord thrust out labourers into His harvest.

About this time also Methodism was introduced into Gibraltar. This was done by the removal thither of the regiment which had for some time been quartered at Winchester. The following extract from a soldier's letter exhibits the piety and zeal of these Christian warriors:—

"GIBRALTAR, *November 23rd*, 1769.

"WE have between thirty and forty joined in the Society from the different regiments, besides some townsfolk and one officer. Our proceedings are as follow: We have preaching every night and morning. We have three nights of the week set apart for class-meeting after the sermon, and on the Sabbath day at eight in the morning, two in the afternoon, and six in the evening: and for our speakers we have Henry Ince, of the 2nd Regiment, Henry Hall, of the Royal Scots, and Brother Morton, under whom the work seems to prosper. Thus I have given you some account of our proceedings in this place."

While Gibraltar was thus favoured, happily Winchester sustained no permanent loss by the removal; for, in the spring of 1770, this regiment was replaced by another, which also contained many pious and zealous soldiers. These, by their example and exertions, gave a considerable impulse to the Methodist Societies in this city, which, in the spring of 1770, was visited with a very gracious revival; so that at the ensuing Conference the condition of Methodism in Winchester was found to be considerably improved.

In the month of December, 1769, Wesley received letters from the preachers who had been sent to New York in the preceding August, announcing their arrival there, and stating that both in that city and Philadelphia great numbers flocked to hear the Gospel, and that the result was a most encouraging enlargement of the Societies in those places.

George Shadford.

George Shadford was about this time brought into the work as a travelling preacher. He was a native of Lincolnshire. Having been converted to God, and having exhorted for some time in the neighbourhood of his home, he

was invited by Wesley to give himself wholly to the work, and was sent this year to West Cornwall as his first Circuit. He was greatly affected during his stay there at the sudden death of a backslider, who had walked in the light of God's countenance seven years, and been diligent in every means of grace; but who afterward gave way to a trifling spirit; neglected his band, class, and the preaching of the Gospel; cultivated intimate acquaintance with his ungodly neighbours, and finally returned to his formerly besetting sin,—drunkenness. Having gone to an alehouse with some of these companions, they all got drunk, and went out to return home. Two others, finding it very dark, lay down in the road; but the backslider persisted in going on alone, fell into a deep pit by the road side, and was crushed to death. This fearful event greatly impressed the neighbourhood, and led many backsliders to return "to Him from whom they had revolted."

Mr. Shadford also travelled in Kent and Norwich, and afterwards went as a minister to America.

Wesley still continued his regular course of travelling, preaching, and supervising the Societies. He notices some cases of remarkable outpourings of the Holy Spirit, as at Wandsworth, where "every one thought no good could be done: we had tried for above twenty years. Very few would even give us the hearing; and the few that did seemed little the better for it. But all on a sudden, crowds flock to hear; many are cut to the heart; many filled with peace and joy in believing; and many long for the whole image of God." * This heart-searching, soul-saving application of the Gospel by the Holy Spirit was, throughout, the great secret of Wesley's progress. It was the motive power which carried him forward in every part of his career.

* Wesley's "Journal," March 8th, 1769.

Twenty-seventh Conference, 1770: its proceedings.

The twenty-seventh annual Conference was held in London, August 7th, 1770. The number of Circuits had increased from forty-six to fifty. The last on the list affords a striking proof of the readiness with which the founder of Methodism entered every open door, and of the quiet confidence with which he carried into practical operation his favourite maxim, "The world is my parish." The simple record is, "No. 50. *America*." The continent of America a Methodist Circuit! It was found that there was a decrease of numbers in ten Circuits; but that on the whole the members had increased from 28,263 to 29,179.

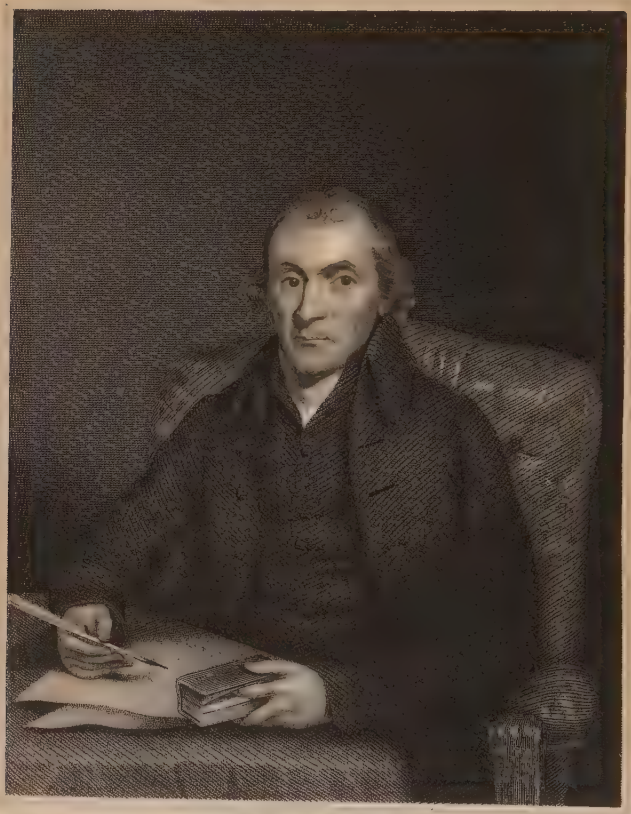
The steady progress of the work induced several important regulations at this Conference.

A law was laid down with a view to remove the existing debts from the Connexion, by suspending the erection of chapels for one year.

It was resolved that in every case of a member's bankruptcy, his books should be examined, that it might be known whether he kept fair accounts, or had been concerned in any improper practices; in which case he was to be expelled.

The usual regulation was made with respect to the support of the preachers' wives; and it was decided that the several Circuits should support the children of the preachers that might be appointed to them.

The special attention of this Conference was called to the urgent necessity for promoting religion throughout the Connexion, by the question, "What can be done to revive the work of God where it is decayed?" This led to an earnest exhortation to diligence in pastoral duty, especially in visiting from house to house. Idleness is declared to be inconsistent with growth in grace. "Nay, without exactness in redeeming time, it is impossible to retain the life



you received in justification." To this were added earnest directions respecting visiting, the circulation of Methodist books, field preaching, morning preaching, singing, fasting, instantaneous deliverance from sin, and a religious concern for children.

The part of these conversations which produced the greatest concern at the time, and to which we shall soon have to recur, arose out of an inquiry founded on the exhortation, "Take heed to your doctrine:" on which it was remarked, "We said, in 1744, 'We have leaned too much toward Calvinism:' wherein?" In answer to this interrogation, several explanations are given respecting *man's faithfulness*, working for life, acceptance with God, &c., evidently intended to afford an affirmative reply to the question, and to stimulate Christian people to a godly and holy life.

In the early part of this Methodistic year, a blessed revival of religion was experienced at Kingswood School; in which almost all the children and servants were brought under very serious impressions, and many of them led to the attainment of salvation. This good work extended to the Society at Kingswood, which soon increased from 118 to above 300 members: "and every day more and more were convinced of sin, and more and more enabled to rejoice in God their Saviour."* This blessed influence extended to the neighbouring towns, and the congregations everywhere greatly increased.

Death of George Whitefield. Wesley preaches his funeral sermon.

On September 30th, 1770 the Rev. George Whitefield died, while on his knees, in his chamber at Newbury, near Boston, America, in the fifty-sixth year of his age. On the news reaching England, his executors waited on Wesley, and requested him to preach his funeral sermon. This

* Wesley's "Journal," October 30th, 1770.

he did on Sunday, November 18th, at Tottenham Court Road in the morning, and at the Tabernacle in the evening, from these words: "Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his." Immense congregations attended at both places. Wesley also preached on the same occasion at the Tabernacle at Greenwich, on Friday, November 23rd, when the congregation was more than could possibly get into the building.

Miss Bosanquet, previously mentioned, about this time felt her spirit so drawn out in the service of God, and her heart so influenced by a love for souls, as to produce a strong conviction in her mind that she was called to preach the Gospel. She accordingly wrote to Wesley, stating her views and feelings on the subject; and received from him the following reply: "I think the strength of the cause rests there, in your having an extraordinary call. So, I am persuaded, has every one of our lay preachers; otherwise I could not countenance their preaching at all. It is plain to me, that the whole work of God termed 'Methodism' is an extraordinary dispensation of His providence. Therefore, I do not wonder, if several things occur therein, which do not fall under ordinary rules of discipline. St. Paul's ordinary rule was, 'I permit not a woman to speak in the congregation;' yet, in extraordinary cases, he made a few exceptions, at Corinth in particular."

Many persons will at the present time regard the "call" of this holy and gifted woman as much more of an extraordinary character than that of the men whom Wesley called "lay preachers." However, she exercised the talents with which the Lord had endowed her, as opportunity offered. Her manner was not to go into a pulpit, but to stand on the stairs, or on some other elevation, so as to be enabled to command the congregation. Her

addresses were generally made a great blessing to the hearers.

When the "Minutes" of the Conference of 1770 were published, the doctrinal statements in opposition to Calvinistic Antinomianism, referred to above, produced an intense excitement amongst the Calvinists, especially those of Lady Huntingdon's Connexion; and the Hon. and Rev. Walter Shirley, cousin and chaplain to the countess, sent the following circular letter to the clergy throughout the three kingdoms:—

Calvinistic opposition to the "Minutes" of 1770.

"Sir,—Whereas Mr. Wesley's Conference is to be held at Bristol, on Tuesday, the 6th of August next, it is proposed by Lady Huntingdon and many other Christian friends, (real Protestants,) to have a meeting at Bristol at the same time, of such principal persons, both clergy and laity, who disapprove of the above 'Minutes;' and as the same are thought injurious to the very fundamental principles of Christianity, it is further proposed, that they go in a body to the said Conference, and insist upon a formal recantation of the said 'Minutes;' and, in case of a refusal, that they sign and publish their protest against them. Your presence, Sir, on this occasion is particularly requested. But if it should not suit your convenience to be there, it is desired that you will transmit your sentiments on the subject to such person as you think proper to produce them. It is submitted to you, whether it would not be right, in the opposition to be made to such a *dreadful* heresy, to recommend it to as many of your Christian friends, as well of the Dissenters as of the Established Church, as you can prevail on to be there, the cause being of so public a nature.

"I am, Sir, your obedient Servant,

"Walter Shirley."

The publication of this circular, with the course of proceedings which it threatened, was a very strong measure. It is true that the judgment formed by Mr. Shirley and his friends of the doctrine of the "Minutes," which they called "*horrible*," "*abominable*," "*dreadful heresy*," was such as to justify any step compatible with Christian principle and feeling. The theological bearing of the case will be afterward considered; here the account must be confined to a statement of facts.

The Conference assembled on the 7th of August, and the "Minutes" were published shortly after. Mr. Shirley's letter, issued without date, appears, from internal evidence and collateral facts, to have been circulated in the spring of the following year. In the latter part of 1770, Mr. Benson was dismissed from the mastership of Lady Huntingdon's college at Trevecka, because he did not believe in absolute predestination; and, before March 22nd, Mr. Fletcher had resigned his office as president of the college, for the same reason. Lady Huntingdon had signified to Mr. Fletcher her design of writing to Wesley, and demanding an explanation of the obnoxious propositions in the "Minutes," which Mr. Shirley had already denounced at Trevecka as "horrible, abominable, and subversive of the pillar on which the Church stands, or with which it falls."* It is not known that Lady Huntingdon ever carried her intention into execution; but soon afterwards Mr. Shirley's circular appeared, and defined the course of action which the Calvinists had determined to take.

Progress of this opposition, and its issue in the publication of Fletcher's "Checks."

Wesley was in Ireland from March 24th to July 22nd, during which time he appears to have received the circular: for he then drew up and printed, at Dublin, under date

* BENSON'S "Life of John Fletcher," pp. 139–145.

"July 10th, 1771," a clear and logical exposition of the doctrines of the "Minutes," which had called forth so much opposition. A copy of this printed paper he probably sent to several of his preachers and friends: it would scarcely have been printed but with this object. The one before me has a manuscript note in Mr. Wesley's handwriting at the top of the first page, and is addressed to Miss Bishop, of Bath. In this note he requests her not to "show it before Conference," adding, "If the Calvinists do not or will not understand me, I understand myself; and I do not contradict anything I have written these thirty years." Towards the conclusion are the words, "Poor Mr. Sh.'s triumph will be short."

As this case has an important bearing on Wesleyan history, we give all the circumstances with tolerable detail, and in so doing must anticipate the occurrences of the following Conference. Wesley had prepared himself for defending the true and proper sense of the "Minutes," by the circular he had printed in Dublin in July. Whether Lady Huntingdon or Mr. Shirley was apprised of this measure cannot now be ascertained; but it is certain that, as the Conference approached, both these persons discovered that they had placed themselves in an untenable position. For, on the 2nd of August,—the Conference being appointed for the 6th,—each of them wrote a long apologetic letter to Wesley, disclaiming the offensive meaning naturally attached to Mr. Shirley's words, namely, "That they go in a body to the said Conference, and insist upon a formal recantation of the said 'Minutes:'" stating that they meant no more "than to send" Wesley "a respectful message importing our design, and withal requesting you would appoint what day and hour would be most suitable to you, and to the members of the Confer-

ence, to receive us." * Mr. Shirley also acknowledged that "the Circular Letter was too hastily drawn up, and improperly expressed; and, therefore, for the *offensive expressions* in it, we desire we may be hereby understood to make every suitable submission to you, Sir, and to the gentlemen of the Conference." †

When Wesley received these letters, he was evidently affected by the altered tone and bearing of the parties, and sent a verbal communication by the messenger, to say that "the two first days of the Conference would be taken up in adjusting matters of their own; but that, if Mr. Shirley and his friends had anything to say to him, they might come to the Conference on Thursday, the 8th." ‡

On that day Mr. Shirley, the Rev. Messrs. Glascot and Owen, two of Lady Huntingdon's ministers, John Lloyd, Esq., of Bath, Mr. James Ireland, merchant, of Bristol, Mr. Winter, and two students belonging to Trevecka college, appeared at the Conference. After Wesley had prayed, Mr. Shirley desired to know whether Lady Huntingdon's letter and his own had been read to the Conference; and, on being answered in the negative, requested to be allowed to read copies of them. His request being complied with, he expressed a hope that the "submission made was satisfactory to the gentlemen of the Conference. This was admitted; but then it was urged,

* Mr. Shirley's letter, as given in his "Narrative of the principal Circumstances relative to the Rev. Mr. Wesley's late Conference, held in Bristol, August 6th, 1771, at which the Rev. Mr. Shirley and others, his Friends, were present; with the Declaration then agreed to by Mr. Wesley and Fifty-three of the Preachers in Connexion with him. By the Rev. Mr. Shirley. Bath, 1771."

† Shirley's "Narrative," p. 11. ‡ *Ibid.*, p. 12.

that as the offence given by the circular letter had been very public, so ought the letter of submission;" * to which Mr. Shirley assented. Wesley then stood up, and gave a sketch of his ministerial course from the beginning, proving that he had ever maintained justification by faith, and that there was nothing contrary thereto in the "Minutes" which had called forth so much opposition. He then complained that he had received much ill-treatment from many persons who had been under obligations to him, and expressed his opinion that the present opposition was not to the "Minutes," but to him personally. Mr. Shirley, in reply, earnestly disclaimed any personal feeling against Mr. Wesley or any other person; and solemnly asserted that his opposition was to the doctrines put forth in the "Minutes;" urging, that he had received numerous protests and testimonies against them from Scotland, and from various parts of these kingdoms; that it was most extraordinary if so many men of sense and learning should be mistaken, as must be the case if there was nothing really offensive in the plain, natural import of the "Minutes." He also added an expression of his confident belief, that even if the meaning which Wesley and the Conference attached to the "Minutes" was perfectly innocent, their more obvious meaning was reprehensible. He then "begged and entreated, for the Lord's sake, that they would go so far as they could with a good conscience in giving the world satisfaction." † After protesting that he had no intention of giving offence, and hoped none would be taken, he proceeded to submit a document to the Conference, which he was most anxious they should sign, if they could consistently do so. Wesley, having made some few alterations in the language of

* SHIRLEY'S "Narrative," p. 13. † *Ibid.*, p. 14.

this paper, saw no reason to object; but Thomas Olivers long and earnestly contended against it. He urged that our acceptance in the day of judgment is by works, and nothing should be done which in any way would weaken the force of this truth. Wesley, with fifty-three of the preachers, signed the following; Olivers persisted in his refusal:—

"DECLARATION.

"WHEREAS the doctrinal points in the 'Minutes' of a Conference held in London, August 7th, 1770, have been understood to favour justification by works; now the Rev. John Wesley and others assembled in Conference do declare, that we had no such meaning, and that we abhor the doctrine of justification by works as a most perilous and abominable doctrine; and as the said 'Minutes' are not sufficiently guarded in the way they are expressed, we hereby solemnly declare in the sight of God, that we have no trust or confidence but in the alone merits of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ for justification or salvation either in life, death, or the day of judgment; and though no one is a real Christian believer (and consequently cannot be saved) who doth not good works, where there is time and opportunity, yet our works have no part in meriting or purchasing our salvation (*justification*) from first to last, either in whole or in part.

"(Signed) JOHN WESLEY," and others.

This done, Mr. Shirley was required to make some public acknowledgment that he had mistaken the meaning of the "Minutes." After some consideration he promised to do so, and a few days afterwards he sent the following note to Wesley:—"Mr. Shirley's Christian respects wait

on Mr. Wesley. The Declaration agreed to in the Conference, August 8th, 1771, has convinced Mr. Shirley he had mistaken the meaning of the doctrinal points in the 'Minutes' of the Conference held in London, August 7th, 1770; and he hereby wishes to testify the full satisfaction he has in the said Declaration, and his hearty concurrence and agreement with the same." With this statement Mr. Shirley informs us Mr. Wesley was well pleased.* This concluded the intercourse between the parties; and, according to the account furnished by Mr. Shirley, which appears, in general, to be candid and truthful, and has been followed in the preceding narrative, the result was satisfactory to both sides. He says, "We concluded with prayer, and with the warmest indications of mutual peace and love." †

The result of this intercourse, however, was not so satisfactory to Wesley as Mr. Shirley supposed. He had not put forth the "Minutes" of 1770 without a weighty and solemn reason. He certainly thought that the evangelical Christians of that day were verging much too near to Antinomianism; and when he reproved his own Connexion for this fault, as *leaning "too much toward Calvinism,"* it is plain that in his judgment the Calvinism of that day was not sufficiently removed from this very serious practical error. He accordingly prepared the letter printed in Dublin, July 10th, 1771, giving a clear and logical exposition of his views on the subject; and if Mr. Shirley had maintained his ground, as taken up in his Circular, and had made no submission, undoubtedly Wesley would have put forth the Dublin document as his defence, and have rested his cause there. When, however, he found that, in consequence of the opposition of Mr. Shirley, Mr. Fletcher had

* SHIRLEY'S "Narrative," p. 17. † *Ibid.*

written a "Vindication of the 'Minutes,'" which had been printed, and was ready for issue immediately after the Conference, and that Mr. Shirley had assumed an attitude which entitled him to a courteous and respectful hearing, Wesley said nothing of the "Dublin Circular," but heard what Mr. Shirley and his friends had to say; and when he produced his famous Declaration, Wesley made such alterations in it as to enable him and fifty-three of his preachers to sign it. But what was the real effect of this Declaration? It simply admitted that some expressions in the "Minutes" were not "sufficiently guarded," and emphatically repudiated the false interpretation which had been put upon them. But it did nothing to explain and enforce the "Minutes," or to supply what was intended to be given in the "Dublin Circular."

It is said above, that Mr. Shirley's "Narrative" appears to be generally "candid and truthful." We much regret to have in any way to qualify this statement. But we are bound to place on record the fact, that in the "Declaration" signed by Wesley and his preachers, the words in the last line are, "our *justification* from first to last," while in that published in Mr. Shirley's "Narrative" the word is changed, and we read, "our *salvation* from first to last:"—an alteration which obscured Wesley's meaning, and was calculated to produce an impression that he had really to some extent altered his views respecting the doctrines of the "Minutes." *

* The manner in which this fact became known is worthy of notice. While engaged on the subject, the author was informed that the original document, bearing the autograph signatures of Wesley and the preachers, had been presented to the Conference (1856) sitting at Bristol. Anxious to have the fullest information on the subject, he obtained, by the kindness of the President, the Rev. Robert Young, an attested copy of the genuine Declaration. By comparing this with the version printed in Mr. Shirley's "Narrative," he discovered that the alteration above mentioned had been made.

Now when it is considered that the claims of practical godliness were as urgent at this Conference as at the preceding; that a serious check had been given to the practical operation of the important doctrines set forth in the "Minutes" by the action of Mr. Shirley; that, indeed, the religious want which Wesley felt was more pressing at this time than it was the year before; it cannot be supposed that he would be content to allow the case to remain in this state. Why, then, did he suppress the "Dublin Circular," which was intended to explain and strengthen the "Minutes?" The answer is very obvious. The conduct of Mr. Shirley prevented the manifestation of any hostile bearing on the part of Wesley. He, therefore, received his visitor kindly, complied with his request, and sent him away well pleased. But it is not clear that he was unmoved by the earnest opposition of Thomas Olivers; that he had no apprehensions that the Calvinistic party would make far too much of the Declaration; or that he was satisfied the united claims of scriptural truth and practical godliness had been fully met. But for all these purposes he had ample means in reserve. Mr. Fletcher's work was ready for issue; it was more elaborate than the "Dublin Circular;" by it the controversy would be transferred from himself, burthened with the care of Churches spread over three kingdoms, to a parish clergyman, every way qualified for the task, and who had leisure to perform it.

It is true, Mr. Shirley deprecated the publishing of the "Vindication." Mr. Fletcher consented to suppress it, and with characteristic modesty expressed a desire to do so; Mr. Ireland, as a mutual friend of the parties, promised to pay the expenses of printing, paper, &c., if it were withdrawn: but the responsibility lay with Wesley, and he

decided to send the important production forth to the world, and, in doing so, undoubtedly supplied what, in his judgment, the cause of religion imperatively required. This opinion of Wesley's conduct is confirmed not only by the facts already stated, but by the manner in which he afterwards referred to these circumstances. He closes his account of this Conference in six or seven lines of his "Journal," barely noticing Mr. Shirley's visit, and observing that he left satisfied, not even naming the Declaration. When, however, he has to refer to Mr. Fletcher's production, he speaks in a different tone. "How much good," he observes, "has been occasioned by the publication of that Circular Letter! This was *the happy occasion* of Mr. Fletcher's writing those 'Checks to Antinomianism;' in which one knows not which to admire most, the purity of the language, (such as scarce any foreigner wrote before,) the strength and clearness of the argument, or the mildness and sweetness of the spirit that breathes throughout the whole," &c.* He therefore certainly thought that the irritation and injury occasioned by Mr. Shirley's attack were more than compensated by the "Checks," and the cause of truth and holiness greatly advantaged by the discussion.

Wesley explains and enforces Methodist discipline in Dublin.

In April, 1771, Wesley again visited Dublin. He was aware that the Society there was in an unsatisfactory state, and determined to inquire fully into the case. Having done so, he says, "It is plain there had been a continual jar for at least two years past, which had stumbled the people, weakened the hands of the preachers, and greatly hindered the work of God."† He accordingly spoke first to the preachers by themselves, then he conversed fully

* WESLEY'S "Life of Fletcher," Works, vol. xi., p. 286.

† WESLEY'S "Journal," April, 1771.

with the leaders, and afterward met and conversed with them all together, and concludes, "I now saw the whole evil might be removed, all parties being desirous of peace." He then drew up a paper, in which he carefully showed the duties and powers of leaders, stewards, preachers, and assistants, and strongly asserted that leaders and stewards were appointed and charged with the duties of those offices; and that these did not include any interference with the preachers, nor any power in the government of the Society.

On this occasion, Wesley travelled through Ireland until the beginning of July. He was now sixty-eight years of age. Yet he rode and preached on the mountains of that country with untiring perseverance. On the 24th of April, he writes, "In the evening I knew not where to preach at Enniscorthy, the wind being very high and very cold. But I was in some measure sheltered by the side of an house; and the people, standing close together, sheltered one another. Only a few careless ones were blown away." *

Sampson Staniforth, and the work at Rotherhithe.

During this year a chapel was built and preaching established at Rotherhithe, principally through the instrumentality of Mr. Sampson Staniforth. This person, although never a minister, nor, indeed, at all separated from secular avocations for the work of the ministry, was a very eminent and useful preacher of the Gospel. He was a native of Sheffield, and brought up in a state of deplorable ignorance of morals and religion. About the year 1739, when nineteen years of age, he enlisted in the army. His regiment was first ordered to Scotland, where he endured many hardships, and plunged more deeply into sin. From thence he was sent to Flanders, where he shared all the dangers of Fontenoy, and all the disasters of the memorable campaign

* Wesley's "Journal," under the date.

with which it stands connected. But although at first he seemed to be sold to work iniquity with greediness, he was here brought to the knowledge of God, through the preaching of John Haime, and the influence of a godly companion. His conviction of sin was very deep, his repentance sincere, and his reception of pardoning mercy remarkably clear.

He soon afterward purchased his discharge from the army, married a young woman with some property, and settled at Deptford as a baker, to which business he had been brought up in his youth. He also diligently laid himself out in the Master's service, preaching in his own house weekly, and abroad as opportunities offered. His abilities and success were great, and he received flattering overtures, soliciting him to leave the Methodists; but, having seriously considered the subject, he gave the following as his deliberate judgment:—"1. It was clear God had blessed me in this way; therefore, I was afraid to go out of it. 2. I saw how much hurt had been done in the Society by these separations. And, 3. As to money or ease, my heart is not set on money; and I am not weary of my labour." In 1764, he was offered, and received, ordination from the hand of the Greek bishop; but as he found it would give offence to some of his brethren, he never assumed any power beyond that of an ordinary local preacher. He had the happiness of seeing the work of God greatly prosper at Rotherhithe.

Conference of 1771: its transactions.

The twenty-eighth Conference was opened at Bristol on the 6th of August, 1771. Besides the business pertaining to Mr. Shirley, which has been anticipated, it was reported that the number of Circuits was reduced from 50 to 48. Essex and Norfolk, which in 1770 were two Circuits, with

one preacher each, were now united under the name of Norwich, with two preachers. Cheshire North and South were united under the name of Chester. Besides these changes, Lancashire South and North became Manchester and Liverpool; Glasgow ceased to be a Circuit, all Scotland being comprehended under Edinburgh and Aberdeen; but Macclesfield was made a Circuit.

The number of members increased this year to 30,338.

To reduce the public debt of the Connexion, it was at this time recommended that every member of Society should, for this year, contribute a penny a week to this object, those in good circumstances being requested to supply the deficiencies of the very poor.

It was also reported that the brethren in America had earnestly applied for more ministerial help, and five brethren offered to go: of these, two were selected and sent, namely, Francis Asbury and Richard Wright. Joseph Benson was at this Conference received on trial, and placed on the "Minutes" as *second* preacher on the London Circuit. Wesley did not strictly adhere to the order of seniority in placing the names of his preachers on the list.

The "Minutes" of this year are remarkable as having, for the first time, the initials of Wesley and his brother in connexion with the lay preachers. Now "J. W.," and "C. W.," stand before the names of the preachers on the London Circuit.

Wesley visited Kingswood soon after the Conference, and laments that so small fruit of the gracious revival which he had witnessed there the last year, remained among the children; little, if any, of the happy results of this visitation being now perceptible. But his sorrow was counterbalanced by the very prosperous circumstances of the work in Weardale, where the Society had increased

Prosperous state of the Society in Weardale.

from 120 in August, 1771, to 165 in June, 1772. It was not, however, the increase of numbers to which Wesley specially referred, but the uniform simplicity and deep piety of the members. Hence, alluding to these 165 members, he says, "Of whom there are but 20 that have not found peace with God. Surely such a work of God has not been seen before in any part of the three kingdoms."

Having inquired into the origin and progress of this revival, and witnessed the effects produced, he proceeded on his ministerial tour, calling at Ewood, preaching at Heptonstall, Keighley, Haworth, Bingley, Bradford, and on July 8th reached Halifax. Here, he says, "my old friend Titus Knight offered me the use of his new meeting;..... but I judged more people would attend in the open air; so I preached in the cow-market to an huge multitude. Our house was well filled at five in the morning. At ten I preached in the new house at Thong; at two in the market-place at Huddersfield, to full as large a congregation as at Halifax. Such another we had at Dewsbury in the evening; and my strength was as my day." Such is Wesley's narrative of these labours. We are able, however, to supply an account of an affecting incident of which the venerable minister makes no mention. "As Wesley at this time, attended by his friends, was either going to, or coming from, the Cow Green, such a bitter spirit of malignity had been engendered in the minds of the commonalty of the town against the Methodists, that on the occasion just adverted to, a man of the name of Bramley, unable longer to subdue his fiendish rage, burst through the crowd, and, running toward Mr. Wesley, struck him a most violent blow with the flat of his hand on his cheek. The holy man paused, and, though the tears started into

his eyes from the smartness of the blow, remembering the admonition of his Master,—'Whosoever shall smite thee on the right cheek, turn to him the other also,'—he turned to his assailant 'the other also.' The coward was so struck with the circumstance that he slunk back into the crowd." It is a remarkable fact, that a near relative of this man, in 1785, was the principal means of preserving the Methodist chapel in Halifax from being consumed by fire, which he did in the most heroic manner, at the imminent hazard of his life.*

Titus Knight, who offered Wesley the use of his chapel, was a very extraordinary person, and one of the great number whom Methodism has raised from their native obscurity, so as to enable them to employ their powers in honourable action, and to take a highly respectable position in the world. He was a poor collier in the neighbourhood of Halifax, who was converted under the preaching of Wesley, on one of his early visits to that town. Subsequently Wesley discovered indications of superior ability in this man, and, having been assured that he had maintained a truly Christian character, and was much devoted to reading, and fond of learning, suggested that he should leave the coal-pit, and endeavour to support himself by teaching a preparatory school. The use of a room adjoining the chapel having been offered to him, Titus began a school for the education of children. "The scheme answered, and the schoolmaster was not only able to maintain a numerous family, but his strong and respectable talents, having now extensive scope for exercise, were considerably improved; in fact, he became a noted character, and commenced the career of a local preacher. He became, indeed, the leading man among the Methodists at Halifax: and his ability and

* WALKER'S "History of Methodism in Halifax," pp. 122, 165.

energy were much needed by them: for although great numbers crowded to hear Wesley when he came into the neighbourhood, the progress of religion was slow; the Society in 1762 appears to have contained but 31 members.

"Yet, instead of giving continued support to the cause to which he owed his all, he gave it, what seemed at the time, a mortal blow. Titus Knight, like many others nurtured in Methodism, afterward embraced the Calvinistic theory of doctrine; and, having done so, left the Methodist Connexion, and took with him many of the congregation and about half of the Society in Halifax. It is but justice to add, that there is no evidence that Mr. Knight was influenced by any feeling but an honest and earnest search after scriptural truth; and it is highly gratifying to have to say, that his future conduct stands out as a highly honourable exception to that of most of those who, for similar reasons, have seceded from the Methodist body. Titus Knight did not find it necessary, or think it becoming, to vilify and abuse his former friends and benefactors. On the contrary, he always remained on the most friendly terms with them, and ever exhibited benevolent and kindly feelings; one instance of which we have in his offering the use of his new and handsome chapel to Wesley, as mentioned above.

"After Mr. Knight left the Methodists, he became an Independent minister, and had first a small chapel, and afterward a large and handsome one in Halifax. The converted Methodist collier not only succeeded in raising a highly respectable Independent interest in that town, and occupying an eminent position as a Christian minister, visiting the metropolis annually, and preaching at the Tabernacle and Tottenham Court Road chapel, but his

greatness was transmitted to his children. One of his sons became vicar of Halifax, much esteemed and beloved; another an eminent surgeon, and a third a highly respectable dissenting minister." *

Conference of 1772.

The twenty-ninth Conference was held in Leeds, August 4th, 1772. Respecting it Wesley says, "Generally, during the time of Conference, as I was talking from morning to night, I had used to desire one of our brethren to preach in the morning. But having many things to say, I resolved, by God's help, to preach mornings as well as evenings. And I found no difference at all: I was no more tired than with my usual labour; that is, no more than if I had been sitting still in my study from morning till night." †

The numbers reported at this Conference showed an increase of 1,646, there being now 31,984 persons in the Societies. The Circuits remained 48, as the last year. Joseph Benson and two other preachers were now fully admitted, after one year's probation.

In February, 1773, Captain Webb, who had done so much to introduce the Gospel by Methodist preaching into America, returned to England, and preached at the Foundery. Of him Wesley wrote, "I admire the wisdom of God, in still raising various preachers, according to the various tastes of men. The captain is all life and fire; therefore, although he is not deep or regular, yet many who would not hear a better preacher, flock together to hear him. And many are convinced under his preaching, some justified, a few built up in love."

During this year Wesley took his usual journeys, and

* WALKER'S "Methodism in Halifax."

† WESLEY'S "Journal," August 4th, 1772.

Wesley in Ireland. Persecution there. Progress of the work in America.

spent several weeks in Ireland. While there, he was informed of the case of one of his preachers, Mr. Macburney. This minister was with a small congregation, singing a hymn, in a house about a quarter of a mile from Achalan, a village six or seven miles from Enniskillen, when a mob beset the house. They broke all the windows, threw a great quantity of stones into the house, then broke open the door, and, hauling out both men and women, beat them without mercy. Soon after they dragged out the preacher, whom they knocked down and beat in a most cruel manner: one thrust a stick into his mouth; another trampled on his face, swearing that he would "tread the Holy Ghost out of him." They continued this violence until they inflicted on him such severe injuries, that for months afterwards he could scarcely sleep or move in consequence of intense pain. One of the persons who were much hurt on this occasion, had his house beset two days afterward, and a hole broken into his door by large stones. But by far the worst part of this case is yet to be told. Both these persons who had their houses broken, applied for warrants against the rioters: these were granted by the justice of the peace, but the constable would not serve the warrants, and, when the assizes came, the grand jury threw out both the bills.

During this year a mighty impulse was given to the work of God in America. Messrs. Asbury and Wright, sent to that country by the Conference of 1771, having reached their destination and entered upon their work, found their ministry greatly owned of God. Before their coming, Messrs. Boardman and Pilmoor, with the help of Captain Webb, could scarcely supply New York, and the places opened for preaching in that vicinity. This limited sphere did not suit the great mind and apostolic spirit of

Asbury. He planned an excursion into the country, and to distant towns; Mr. Pilmoor followed his example, and their labours were abundantly successful. They were sometimes opposed and persecuted: but they were the means of spreading Methodist influence and teaching far and wide in the new world.

Mr. Fletcher continued the controversy with the Calvinists, by the publication of his "Checks to Antinomianism;" and, in doing so, fully justified the soundness of Wesley's judgment in not consenting to suppress his first vindication of the "Minutes." The "Narrative" which Mr. Shirley published soon after the Conference of 1771, detailing the circumstances arising out of his "Circular Letter" and visit to the Conference, contained passages in which the author, with affected triumph altogether unwarranted by the circumstances, construes the Declaration signed by Wesley and the preachers, into a repudiation of the doctrines laid down in the "Minutes."

Mr. Fletcher continues the publication of his "Checks."

This publication called forth Mr. Fletcher's "Second Check to Antinomianism." In the preface he gives two letters, one to Wesley, the other to Mr. Shirley. The publication of the first "Check" is justified against the imputations of the "Narrative;" and reason is shown, from the injury inflicted on Mr. Wesley and on the cause in which he was engaged, for the production of further explanation and defence. For this purpose Mr. Fletcher inserts part of a letter which he received, and from which the following is an extract: "But is that Declaration, however dispersed, a remedy adequate to the evil done, not only to Mr. Wesley, but to the cause and work of God? Several Calvinists, in eagerness of malice, had dispersed their calumnies through the three kingdoms. A truly excellent person herself, in her mistaken zeal, had repre-

sented him as a 'Papist unmasked,' an 'heretic,' an 'apostate.' A clergyman of the first reputation informs me, a poem on his 'Apostasy' is just coming out. Letters have been sent to every serious Churchman and Dissenter through the land, together with the 'Gospel Magazine.' Great are the shoutings, 'And now that he lieth, let him rise up no more!' This is all the cry. His dearest friends and children are staggered, and scarce know what to think. You, (Mr. Fletcher,) in your corner, cannot think of the mischief that has been done, and is still doing. But your letters, in the hands of Providence, may answer the good ends you proposed by writing them." *

Fletcher's "Second Check."

In the "Second Check," Mr. Fletcher completely disproves the allegations of the "Narrative," as to Wesley, and the preachers who signed the Declaration, having protested against the doctrine for which Thomas Olivers contended; and shows that a second justification by good works at the day of judgment, is at once the doctrine of the "Minutes," and of Holy Scripture. In a postscript the author notices a scandalous pamphlet which had been issued under the title of a "Conversation between Richard Hill, Esquire, the Rev. Mr. Madan, and Father Walsh," the superior of a convent in Paris. In this Conversation the Popish monk is said to have condemned Wesley's "Minutes" as too near Pelagianism; and the editor consequently declared, "that the principles in the extract of the 'Minutes' are too rotten even for a Papist to rest upon." † Mr. Fletcher deals briefly, but conclusively, with the statements of this coarse piece. "Astonishing," says he, "that our opposers should think it worth their while to raise one recruit against us in the immense city

* Fletcher's "Works," vol. i., p. 291.

† "A Conversation," &c. London: E. and C. Dilly, 1771, pp. 11, 14.

of Paris, where fifty thousand might be raised against the Bible itself!" And towards the conclusion, he asks, "What is the decision of a Popish monk to the express declarations of Scripture, the dictates of common sense, the experience of regenerate souls, and the writings of a cloud of Protestant divines?.....I think it therefore my duty to publish these strictures, lest any of my readers should pay more regard to the good-natured friar, who has been pressed into the service of Dr. Crisp, than to St. John, St. Paul, St. James, and Jesus Christ; on whose plain declarations I have shown the 'Minutes' are founded." *

The "Second Check" called forth a pamphlet of forty pages, entitled "Five Letters to the Reverend Mr. F——r, relating to his Vindication of the 'Minutes' of the Rev. Mr. John Wesley, intended for the Comfort of mourning Backsliders, and such as may have been distressed and perplexed by reading Mr. Wesley's 'Minutes,' or the Vindication of them. By the Author of *Pietas Oxoniensis*." † The disingenuous author labours to the utmost to damage the doctrine of the "Minutes," and to ward off the force of their vindication by an adroit employment of all the niceties of Calvinian theology, and the most studied and persevering confusion between a believer's present acceptance with God, and his admission to final reward at the last day. To this effusion Mr. Fletcher produced a masterly reply in his "Third Check."

Great religious importance of this controversy.

Those who now look back on this controversy, and regard it as a trial of skill between rival polemics, or even as a contest for the ascendancy of any particular doctrine, take a very unworthy view of the case, and one very different from the estimate formed by Mr. Fletcher. That

* Fletcher's "Works," vol. i., p. 388.

† London: E. and C. Dilly. 1771.

holy man said, on beginning his "Third Check," "If I am not mistaken, we stand now as much in need of a reformation from Antinomianism, as our fathers did of reformation from Popery; and I am not without hope, that the extraordinary attack which has lately been made on Mr. Wesley's anti-Crispian propositions, and the manner in which they are defended, will open the eyes of many, and check the rapid progress of so enchanting and pernicious an evil. This hope inspires me with fresh courage." *

Mr. Fletcher was unquestionably right in his judgment on this point. Antinomianism was the true and proper Satanic antidote for those revived Gospel ministrations which originated in the labours of Wesley and Whitefield. It spread a curse co-extensive with the ministration of Gospel blessing, and prepared a sphere in which "all life dies, and all death lives." Whoever doubts this statement, need look no farther for proof than into the artless and truthful Journal of John Nelson.

Mr. Richard Hill, who, as the author of *Pietas Oxoniensis,* had written the five letters which called forth the "Third Check," now published six letters more, in reply to which Mr. Fletcher produced his "Fourth Check;" "which," the pious author said, "will, I hope, decide the controversy about the anti-Crispian doctrine of justification by the evidence of works at the last day;.....and I do not see that they have anything to object to it but mere cavils, which disgrace their cause." †

Conference of 1773.

The thirtieth Conference began in London, August 3rd, 1773. Among the names of the preachers admitted are those of Joseph Bradford and James Wood. The number of Circuits remained the same, namely, 48; but the in-

* Benson's "Life of Fletcher," p. 149. † *Idem, ibid.*

crease of members was 1,288, the number now reported being 33,272. The paper presented to the Conference of 1769 for the consideration of the preachers, and intended to serve as a bond of union in the event of the removal of Wesley by death, was again brought under their notice, and signed by forty-seven preachers.

Thomas Rankin and George Shadford sent to America.

During the preceding year, Thomas Rankin and George Shadford had been sent to strengthen the hands of the ministers in America. They arrived at Philadelphia in June, 1773. Wesley had not been perfectly satisfied with the conduct of all the preachers in America, in respect of the administration of the sacraments; and, having the fullest confidence in Mr. Rankin, he appointed him general assistant of the Societies in America; an office the duties of which he zealously discharged, and secured the object for which he was appointed, although in doing this he evinced too much austerity to allow of his being popular.

Mr. Rankin was indeed one of Wesley's most valuable assistants. He was a native of Dunbar, in East Lothian. The principal instruments in his conversion were some pious dragoons belonging to a troop then stationed at Dunbar, who had been brought to a knowledge of God through John Haime and his companions. These soldiers held religious meetings, which were attended by Rankin and others, greatly to their edification; and, in the use of these and other religious means, he was brought to experience the pardoning mercy of God. Soon afterward he had impressions of being called to preach; but, seeing no open door, he accepted the offer of some relations to take charge of a commercial voyage to America, and appears to have discharged its duties very creditably. Being, however, thrown into much mixed company, and deprived to a great extent of the means of grace, he suf-

fered spiritual loss, which on his return to Scotland led him to deep humiliation and earnest prayer. He now became more intimately acquainted with Methodism, and was soon afterward called to preach. The deep and, indeed, agonizing exercises through which he was led to this conviction, were truly remarkable. He put himself in correspondence with those who, on hearing his case, said, "You will never get free from all these evil reasonings until you give yourself wholly up to the work of God;" and to this he at length consented.

The first American Conference. Mr. Fletcher's "Fifth Check." Wesley's Works published.

On the 14th of July, 1773, the first Wesleyan Conference was held in America. At this time there were six Circuits in that country: New York, Philadelphia, New Jersey, Baltimore, Norfolk, and Petersburg; with 10 preachers and 1,160 members. The great principles which governed the Societies at home were enforced here, especially that the preachers were prohibited from administering the sacraments, and required to urge their people to attend the church, and receive the ordinances there. The Wesleyan plan of stationing the preachers having been fully adopted, and Wesleyan discipline being diligently enforced by Mr. Rankin, the work of God advanced with remarkable rapidity and power.

Mr. Fletcher continued the publication of his controversial works. Mr. Richard Hill, having pressed several coadjutors into the service, still resisted the doctrine of the "Checks;" and, in reply to the "Fourth Check," published what he styled, "The Finishing Stroke." This piece, instead of finishing the controversy, called forth the "Fifth Check;" the first part of which was entitled "An Answer to The Finishing Stroke." It was dated September 13th, 1773; and to it was appended a brief exposition "of the remaining difference between the

Calvinists and anti-Calvinists with respect to our Lord's doctrine of justification by works, and St. James's doctrine of justification by works." The second part is an answer to Mr. Berridge, vicar of Everton, who, to sustain the sinking cause of extreme Calvinism, had published a piece entitled, "The Christian World unmasked." To this piece Mr. Fletcher supplied a very able, temperate, and religious reply.

Wesley, having made previous preparation, now completed the publication of his collected works,—namely, those which he extracted or abridged from other authors, and those which on various occasions he had himself written,—in thirty-two volumes, duodecimo; a very remarkable proof of his persevering industry, energy, and fertility of mind, especially considering his incessant travelling, preaching, and superintendence of the Societies.

Conference of 1774. James Rogers and Samuel Bradburn.

On the 9th of August, 1774, the thirty-first Conference was begun at Bristol. The number of Circuits was 50, the increase being occasioned by the creation of the Thirsk and Dundee Circuits. The increase of members for the year was 2,340, the number now reported being 35,612. It was found that the married preachers were much straitened on account of the insufficient allowance made for their wives: the case was therefore fully considered, and it was resolved that £12 a year should be allowed for every preacher's wife, by the respective Circuits, in addition to lodgings, coals, and candles, or, in lieu of these, £15 a year additional.

The number of preachers' signatures to the proposed terms of future union was increased to seventy-three. There was now great peace and general religious prosperity throughout the Connexion; but it was heavily

burdened with debt, occasioned by the too rapid multiplication of chapels, which frequently subjected Wesley and the Conference to considerable difficulty.

Samuel Bradburn and James Rogers appear on the "Minutes" for the first time at this Conference. They were truly eminent men. Mr. Rogers had been appointed to the York Circuit soon after the Conference of 1772, to supply the place of Mr. Rankin, who was sent to America; but his health was so delicate, that he was obliged to desist from the work. He says of himself, that, through the means of the cold bath at Ilkley Wells, he felt much better; and adds, "After using it for about three months, in October, 1773, I went to Thirsk, and, at the request of many kind friends, I spent my winter there." At the following Conference (1774) he was appointed to that Circuit. Mr. Rogers was a native of Marske, in Yorkshire, was converted to God when about twenty years of age, and was soon afterward called of God to preach the Gospel to his sinful neighbours. This course exposed him to great persecution, one instance of which he has furnished:—

"After they had often disturbed us in our preaching-house, one night these sons of Belial collected all their forces, and assembled at the door to attack us as we came out. Their number was great; and I had no sooner dismissed the people, than they began the assault. Hearing this, I pushed forward from the pulpit, and got into the midst of them. They saluted me with volleys of oaths, and showers of stones and dirt, and in less than two minutes fell to blows. One of the stoutest of them advanced, with eyes full of fury, and made several strokes at my head; but I received them upon my left arm, which by this means was much bruised. When he could not bring me to the ground, he was enraged; and, watching his

opportunity, whilst I endeavoured to rescue one of my friends whom they were beating, he came behind, and gave me such a blow on my right temple, that I staggered like a drunken man. My hat fell off, and my senses were greatly confused: so that I must have fallen, had he followed his blow. This, doubtless, he would have done; but in that moment a young girl, who had lately been awakened and had joined our Society, thinking I was much hurt, instantly took up a stone, about two pounds' weight, and threw it at his back. He then left me, to revenge himself upon her; and, indeed, she suffered dreadfully: for he took up a stone, equally large, and threw it with such violence in her face, that she fell to the ground, and lay motionless. She was supposed to be dead, and was carried home to her mother's house. However, it pleased God that she recovered; yet she was cut in the most dreadful manner, having her cheek laid open to the bone; and she will bear this mark of suffering for her Lord's sake to her dying hour. Others of our friends were hurt. One in particular had his face almost covered with blood; and his coat, waistcoat, and shirt torn half-way down his back. It is probable we might have come worse off still, had not God taken our part: for as 'the stars in their courses fought against Sisera,' so the Lord struck our enemies with terror, by sending in that very moment dreadful flashes of lightning from a cloud which seemed to burst over their guilty heads. Finding an opportunity, while they were terrified, we endeavoured to escape; but retreated gradually, as some of our people were old and infirm, and we were not willing to leave them in the rear, lest they should become a prey. The next day we found means to bring some of the ring-leaders to justice, and they disturbed us no more."

Samuel Bradburn was born in the Bay of Gibraltar. On

the return of his parents to England, they settled in Chester. He was in early life deeply convinced of sin, joined the Methodist Society, and found peace with God; and, his heart glowing with love to God, and influenced by a strong desire for the salvation of souls, he was soon called to preach the Gospel of Christ. He acted as a local preacher in 1773, and was received as an itinerant in 1774. Endowed with very extraordinary gifts, great genius, and mighty eloquence, he was exceedingly popular as a preacher; thousands hung on his lips with delight, and God owned his ministry by the salvation of many.

Second American Conference.

On the 25th of May, 1774, the second Conference was begun in America. It was held this year at Philadelphia; seven preachers were admitted on trial, and five received into full connexion. The number of Circuits was increased from ten to seventeen, and the number of members was nearly doubled, there being at this time 2,073 in the several Societies.

On November 4th, 1774, John Downes, one of the itinerant preachers, died in great peace. He was taken ill in the pulpit whilst preaching in West Street Chapel, London, and died the following Saturday. Wesley not only had a high opinion of his piety and general ability, but regarded him as very richly endowed with mathematical, mechanical, and artistic genius. Indeed, he says of him, "I suppose he was as great a genius as Sir Isaac Newton; such strength of genius has scarce been known in Europe before." *

* "I will mention but two or three instances of it:—When he was at school, learning algebra, he came one day to his master, and said, 'Sir, I can prove this proposition a better way than it is proved in the book.' His master thought it could not be; but, upon trial, acknowledged it to be so. Some time after, his father sent him to Newcastle with a clock, which was

During his usual journeys this year, Wesley found the Society at Plymouth Dock (Devonport) in a very improved state. He preached in the New Square with great comfort. On the 25th of November, 1774, he preached the first Methodist sermon at St. Ives, Huntingdonshire. The Societies at Tewkesbury and Worcester were, at this time, favoured with great spiritual prosperity. In the course of his journey through Ireland, in the month of June, Wesley was taken dangerously ill; but, after being three or four days in bed, he gradually recovered, pursued his journey, and resumed his preaching.

In March, 1775, John Crook, a zealous local preacher, visited the Isle of Man, and diligently preached Christ to the Manx islanders. The Lord crowned his labours with great success. He soon afterward became an itinerant, and laboured in that island at different times about nine or ten years.

Conference of 1775.

The thirty-second Conference was held at Leeds, and began August 1st, 1775. The Circuits were now increased to 51. The increase of members was 2,533, the numbers being 38,145. The number of preachers signing the articles of union was increased to eighty. Sundry regula-

to be mended. He observed the clockmaker's tools, and the manner how he took it in pieces, and put it together again; and, when he came home, first made himself tools, and then made a clock, which went as true as any in the town.

"Another proof of it was this:—Thirty years ago, while I was shaving, he was whittling the top of a stick: I asked, 'What are you doing?' He answered, 'I am taking your face, which I intend to engrave on a copper-plate.' Accordingly, without any instruction, he first made himself tools, and then engraved the plate. The second picture which he engraved, was that which was prefixed to the 'Notes upon the New Testament.' Such another instance, I suppose, not all England, or perhaps Europe, can produce."—WESLEY'S "Works," vol. iv., p. 33.

tions were made for the renewal of chapel trusts, the reduction of the public debt, and the providing of funds for building new chapels; and leave was given for the erection of chapels at Oldham, Taunton, and Halifax. It was also found that the classes were in many places too large, and it was recommended to divide every one that contained more than thirty members.

Thorough examination of the qualifications of preachers. John Valton.

Previous to this Conference, Wesley had received several letters complaining that many of the preachers were utterly unqualified for the work, having neither sufficient grace nor gifts; on which, he says, "I determined to examine the weighty charge with all possible exactness. In order to this, I read those letters to all the Conference, and begged that every one would freely propose, and enforce, whatever objection he had to any one. The objections proposed were considered at large; in two or three difficult cases committees were appointed for that purpose. In consequence of this, we were all fully convinced that the charge advanced was without foundation; that God had really sent those labourers into His vineyard, and has qualified them for the work; and we were more closely united together than we had been for many years."

At this Conference John Valton was received on trial as an itinerant preacher. His parents were Roman Catholics, natives of France, who removed to London in 1738. John was born in England two years afterwards. He was trained to a regular attendance at the Romish chapels in London; and, when nine years old, was taken to France, and placed under the care of an abbot; and was, in turn with other pupils, arrayed in a surplice, and allowed to assist at the altar during the celebration of mass. When about thirteen, he was brought to England, and sent to a grammar school in Yorkshire, was taken to church, and

received confirmation from the Bishop of Chester. After this ceremony, he was grievously troubled in his conscience; but this soon wore away. When about fifteen years of age, Hervey's "Meditations" fell into his hands, and produced a great effect on his mind, and he seriously determined to amend his life. About two years afterward, his friends procured him a clerkship in the Ordnance, where he served eighteen years successively at Portsmouth, at Greenwich, in Portugal, and again at Greenwich. Mixing up constantly with civil, naval, and military officers, he fell into the sins and vices incident to his age and circumstances.

Soon after his return to Greenwich, he was sent to the royal magazines at Purfleet. Here he was brought into intercourse with some Methodists; and the result was his speedy conviction of sin. At first, however, he purposed leaving off his grosser sins and accustomed amusements; and resolved to submit to self-denial, and to add some little charities, and thus gradually, as his remaining Popish notions taught him, to atone for past transgressions. Further intercourse with experienced Christians, however, soon removed these false notions; but left him, notwithstanding, in great perplexity. He then wrote an anonymous letter to Wesley, informing him without reserve of the state of his mind. He received a reply which, with the explanations of his Methodist friends, removed most of his difficulties; and at the beginning of February, 1764, he determined to give himself fully to the service of God. His delicate and sensitive frame was frequently and strangely agitated: he was sorely tempted; sometimes overcome by the enemy and hurried into sin; at other times cheered with rich consolation, and encouraged to hold on his way. At length, by faith in Christ, he realized the peace and love of God. His soul then yearned over the sad condi-

tion of sinners, and he began to exhort them "to flee from the wrath to come." Although sometimes bordering on distraction through nervous disease, and anon violently assaulted by his spiritual enemy, he grew in grace, and attained glorious union and fellowship with God. Meanwhile he prosecuted his work, attending to his secular duties, and "preaching day and night in the villages."

In November, 1769, Wesley wrote to him, giving it as his opinion that he was called to give himself fully to the work of the Lord. Mr. Valton answered in such a manner that Wesley replied, "You are not now: I believe, you will be by and by." This conjecture was verified. Mr. Valton proceeded with his religious exercises successfully; but his health failed so seriously from the damp situation of Purfleet, that it deeply impressed his own mind; and one of his friends wrote to him, saying, "I do not know but God has spoken the word, PREACH OR DIE." This decided him. He resigned his situation under the Board of Ordnance, went to the Leeds Conference, and was received on trial. A pension of about forty pounds *per annum* for his eighteen years' service enabled him to travel as a single man, without receiving any allowance from his Circuit except his food, giving his surplus income, beyond what his wants required, to the poor.*

Third American Conference.

The third American Conference was held in Philadelphia. It began on the 17th of May, 1775, and continued from Wednesday to Friday, "with great harmony and sweetness of temper." The latter remark is made, we are told, with a view to show that notwithstanding some difficulties had occurred between Mr. Rankin and Mr. Asbury, they were not so serious as to interrupt the harmony of their counsels. To a difference of judgment between them

* "Life of the Rev. John Valton. By JOSEPH SUTCLIFFE, M.A."

Mr. Asbury frequently alludes, by which it appears that in his opinion Mr. Rankin assumed too much authority over the preachers and people.* The number of preachers in America had increased to 19, and 1,075 members had been added in the year, making the aggregate of the Societies 3,148.

About the time that the first Methodist Conference was held in America, serious disputes arose between the mother country and these colonies. These disputes had now resulted in open war. A few weeks before this Conference was held, blood had been shed in the first skirmish between the king's troops and the colonists at Lexington; and everything portended a sanguinary struggle. These circumstances rendered the condition of the preachers who had been sent from England, and who had the principal direction of the Societies, exceedingly embarrassing. Trained by Wesley in the purest principles of loyalty, they were sure to be regarded with distrust and suspicion by the excited colonists, who considered themselves so deeply injured as to be compelled to take up arms in defence of their liberties. These events even now began to circumscribe the usefulness of the Methodist ministers.

Peril of the English preachers.

Mr. Fletcher, having made considerable preparation during the preceding year, now published three most important works in continuation of his controversy with the Calvinists. The first of these was, "The Fictitious and Genuine Creed," occasioned by the publication of Mr. Hill's "Arminian Creed," appended to "Three Letters to Mr. Fletcher." He places the fictitious articles of Mr. Hill's creed in juxtaposition with the articles of a real Arminian creed; and thus shows the fallacy of Mr. Hill's

Further controversial works of Mr. Fletcher.

* Dr. Bangs's "History of the Methodist Episcopal Church," vol. i., p. 86.

allegations. The second of these pieces was "Zelotes and Honestus reconciled: or, An Equal Check to Pharisaism and Antinomianism continued;" including the first and second parts of "The Scripture Scales." The third was, "A Treatise on Christian Perfection." These may be fairly placed amongst the most valuable polemical works in the English language, for scriptural truthfulness, closeness of reasoning, purity of language, and sanctity of spirit. They fill about eight hundred closely printed duodecimo pages.

Conference of 1776. State of the Connexion.

The thirty-third Conference began at London on the 6th of August, 1776. The number of Circuits had increased to 55, notwithstanding the omission of America, in consequence of the suspension of all intercourse with the revolted colonies by the war then raging.

This addition of three Circuits to the list was occasioned by the erection of Lynn into a Circuit; the division of Haworth into Keighley and Colne Circuits; and by distributing the Derbyshire Circuit and the Lincolnshire Circuits, East and West, into the five following,—Leicester, Nottingham, Grimsby, Gainsborough, and Epworth;—making in England an increase of four Circuits, which the separation of America reduced to three. The increase of members in the United Kingdom was 1,631, the total aggregate of the Societies being 39,826. The numbers reported from America last year, namely, 3,148, were again set down at this time, as the increase there was not known.

Further examination into qualifications of preachers. Advice respecting Calvinism.

It was found that the rigid scrutiny made at the preceding Conference into the character and abilities of the preachers had not removed all objections to them. It was therefore inquired, "*Q.* Are there any objections to any of our preachers. *A.* Yes. It is objected that some are

utterly unqualified for the work, and that others do it negligently, as if they imagined they had nothing to do but to preach once or twice a day."

"In order to silence this objection for ever, which has been repeated ten times over, the preachers were examined at large, especially those concerning whom there was the least doubt. The result was, that one was excluded for insufficiency, two for misbehaviour. And we are thoroughly satisfied that all the rest had both grace and gifts for the work wherein they are engaged. I hope, therefore, we shall hear of this objection no more."* There were now 155 itinerant preachers in Great Britain and Ireland.

The prevalence and evils of extreme Calvinism were also recognised and deplored. The preachers were exhorted to make universal redemption a prominent part of their preaching, to answer all objections that may be urged against it "with sweetness both of look and voice," and to advise "our people not to hear" those who preach opposite doctrines. They were also exhorted to recommend the people to read Wesley's, Fletcher's, and Sellon's works on this controversy. Complaint was also made that the Irish and Scotch Circuits did not contribute their quota to the yearly expenses; and they were informed that their having preachers from England in future would be contingent on their doing so.

This year, namely, August 13th, 1776, an event occurred which, although not attracting much attention at the time, has produced important results in every part of the world, and will doubtless continue to do so to the end of time. It was the union formed between Wesley and Dr. Coke.

* "Minutes," 1776.

Dr. Coke seeks union with Wesley.

This important circumstance is thus recorded in Wesley's "Journal:" "I preached at Taunton, and afterwards went with Mr. Brown to Kingston. Here I found a clergyman, Dr. Coke, late gentleman commoner of Jesus College in Oxford, who came twenty miles on purpose. I had much conversation with him; and an union then began which I trust shall never end." Wesley makes no further reference to the antecedents of Dr. Coke, or to the conversation which took place between them. It is important, however, to give some information on these topics, both on account of the prominent position which the Doctor afterward occupied in the Methodist Connexion, and for the purpose of showing the means by which a mind earnest and ardent, but only partially enlightened, was led to the knowledge of salvation, and to a most distinguished and successful course of labour in the service of our Redeemer. And we have the means of doing so in the words of an eminent minister, who was personally and intimately acquainted with the parties, and familiar with all the circumstances of the case.

"Dr. Coke was infected with infidel principles while at the University, in which he was unhappily strengthened by his ungodly tutor. From this perilous infection he was, in a considerable degree, delivered by reading the works of Bishop Sherlock and some other divines; but he continued a mere theoretic believer till some time after his connexion with Mr. Wesley.

"He was, as his biographer acknowledges, naturally ambitious and aspiring, and for some years had made great efforts to obtain preferment in the Church; but finding himself disappointed, and at length shut up in the curacy of South Petherton, in Somersetshire, he became very unhappy, and felt the want of that real good which, as yet,

was unknown to him. At this time he found some comfort by reading, in secret, the prayers composed for King William by Archbishop Tillotson. Those gracious drawings, I have reason to believe, from his own account, was all the experience which he had of divine things, till after his union with the Methodists.

"About this time the doctor became acquainted with the Rev. Mr. Brown, of Taunton, an old friend of Mr. Wesley. From this gentleman he received some of the writings both of Mr. Wesley and Mr. Fletcher, which opened to his view scenes of usefulness, accompanied with labour and suffering, to which, till then, he had been a stranger. All that was of God, in his naturally aspiring mind, eagerly seized those openings of a new life; and 'the ambitious stirrings,' which Mr. Southey has imputed to Mr. Wesley,—not only without, but contrary to, all evidence,—were realized in the active mind of Dr. Coke.

"Hearing soon after that Mr. Wesley was on his way to Cornwall, and would be at Mr. Brown's on a particular day, the Doctor resolved to visit that gentleman, and thus obtain an introduction to the great founder of Methodism, whom he now admired above all men.

"He found Mr. Wesley, as usual, mild and easy of access, with an appearance of happiness that exceedingly impressed him. The Doctor stayed all night; and, in the morning, Mr. Wesley having walked into the garden, he joined him there, and made known his situation and enlarged desires. Mr. Wesley, with marked sobriety, gave him an account of the way in which he and his brother proceeded at Oxford, and advised the Doctor to go on in the same path, doing all the good he could, visiting from house to house, omitting no part of his clerical duty; and counselled him to avoid every reasonable ground of

offence. The Doctor was exceedingly surprised, and, indeed, mortified. 'I thought,' said he, when he related the account to me, 'he would have said, *Come with me, and I will give you employment according to all that is in your heart.*' But to be thus put off, and confined still to the work of a parish, while such extensive labours and usefulness passed in vision before him, was a disappointment he could hardly bear.

"He, however, began; and, his warm and active mind gathering strength in its progress, he proceeded to turn the parish into a kind of Methodist Circuit. He visited and preached in every part of it; and, as some showed signs of dissatisfaction, and spoke against his proceedings, he cast off all restraint; and after the second lesson on the Sunday morning, he commenced the practice of reading an account of his intended labours for the week to come, to the amazement of his auditory."* Yet, through good report and evil report, this energetic young minister held on his way. Having but a very imperfect acquaintance with the religion of Christ, he nevertheless endeavoured to do all the good in his power to those around him.

Revival in America. Conference held in Baltimore.

About this time there was a very glorious revival of religion in Virginia. Eighteen hundred members were added to the Brunswick Circuit between the Conference of 1775 and that of 1776. The Conference of this last-mentioned year was held in Baltimore. The numbers reported in the several Societies was 4,921, and nine preachers were admitted on trial. Four new Circuits were formed, namely, Fairfax, Hanover, Pennsylvania, and Carolina, so that eleven Circuits were returned, on which twenty-five preachers were stationed. The political state

* Rev. H. Moore's "Life of John Wesley," vol. ii., p. 310.

of the country was, however, most unpropitious. About ten days after this Conference, the Congress declared the thirteen united colonies which they represented *free and independent states*. This measure cut off all hope of a reconciliation between the parent country and the revolted colonies. The war was accordingly prosecuted with vigour on both sides, although neither was well prepared for a struggle of such magnitude.

Wesley, under date "March 1st, 1775," wrote a very able letter to the preachers in America, pointing out the extreme delicacy of their position, and counselling them to a course of caution, conciliation, and peace. It is in this year that we hear of Freeborn Garretson, who afterward was so eminent for devoted labours and usefulness. As the coasts of America were now covered by our ships of war, and all the usual channels of intercourse between the two countries were closed, neither the American Circuits nor preachers appear on the Minutes. But the fierce raging of this contest was not confined to America. The difference of opinion which obtained among the several political parties at home, respecting the policy adopted by the mother country toward the colonies, occasioned intense feeling and sharp controversy in England.

Publications of Wesley and Fletcher on the policy of England toward America.

To give this state of feeling a right direction, and to check its violence, Wesley wrote "A Calm Address to our American Colonies." This tract was published in 1775, and was followed in 1776 by another, entitled, "Some Observations on Civil Liberty." He contended that the Parliament of England had a perfect right to tax the Colonies, and that the resistance of the Americans was therefore not an opposition to tyranny, but a rebellion against legitimate authority. But he did more than this. Whilst he gave his views of the religious and political

duties of the subject, he wrote a letter,—copies of which appear to have been sent to Lord North as premier, and to Lord Dartmouth as the secretary for the colonies,—in which, with the most profound sagacity, he showed that the course taken by the government was cruel and unwise, and would, if persevered in, certainly lead to the entire loss of these colonies, and otherwise expose the mother country to danger and disaster. We are happy to be able to present our readers with a copy of this remarkable communication.*

Mr. Fletcher had adopted similar views, and wrote a vindication of Wesley's "Calm Address," and one or two other tracts on the subject: these attracted attention, and were made known in the highest circles. Mr. Vaughan wrote to Wesley, saying, "After Mr. Fletcher had published two or three small political pieces in reference to our contest with the Americans, I carried one of them to the Earl of D——. His lordship carried it to the lord chancellor, and the lord chancellor handed it to the king. One was immediately commissioned to ask Mr. Fletcher whether any preferment in the Church would be acceptable? Or whether he (the lord chancellor) could do him any service?" The reply was characteristic of that simple-minded and holy man. "I want nothing," said he, "but more grace."

The publication, however, of these views and arguments rendered the condition of the Methodist preachers in America more difficult and perilous, subjecting them to suspicion, and in many instances to persecution and danger.

In England the great object of interest at this period was the erection of the New Chapel and premises at City

* See Appendix E, at the end of this volume.

Road, London. Wesley had previously alluded to the short tenure he was likely to have in the Foundery, and to the importance of having a suitable chapel provided. Accordingly, before the Conference of 1776, "above a thousand pounds" was subscribed for this object at the first meeting held for the purpose.* Under date "October 18th, 1776," Wesley sent the following circular through the Connexion.

"*October* 18*th*, 1776.

"My dear Brother,

Arrangements for building City Road Chapel, London.

"The Society of London have given assistance to their brethren in various parts of England. They have done this for upwards of thirty years. They have done so cheerfully and liberally. The first year of the subscription for the *general debt*, they subscribed above *nine hundred pounds:* the next, above *three hundred;* and not much less every one of the ensuing years.

"They now stand in need of assistance themselves. They are under a necessity of building, as the *Foundery*, with all the adjoining houses, is shortly to be pulled down. And the City of London has granted ground to build on; but on condition of covering it, and with large houses in front,† which, together with the new chapel, will, at a moderate computation, cost upwards of *six thousand pounds*. I must therefore beg the assistance of all our brethren.

* Wesley's "Journal," August 2nd, 1776.

† It is believed that these "large houses in front" were, according to the original plan, to have extended all the breadth of the ground, completely shutting off the chapel from the street, and leaving an arched or covered passage to it. The refusal of the trustees to carry out this design nearly cost them the chapel. But after taking very great trouble, and running serious risk, they induced the city authorities to accept a revised plan, having one house at each end, with palisades between, as seen at present.

Now help the *Parent* Society, which has helped others for so many years so willingly and so largely. *Now* help *Me*, who account this as a kindness done unto myself; perhaps the last of this sort which I shall ask of you. Subscribe what you conveniently can, to be paid either now, or at Christmas, or at Lady-day next.

"I am your affectionate Brother,

"JOHN WESLEY.

"The Trustees are { JOHN DUPLEX, CHARLES GREENWOOD, RICHARD KEMP, SAMUEL CHANCELLOR, CHARLES WHEELER, WILLIAM COWLAND, JOHN FOLGHAM."

The yearly subscription was suspended this year, in order to allow free scope for the exercise of liberality towards this important object. Wesley laid the foundation stone of the New Chapel on April 2nd, 1777. The large-minded effort gave to the Connexion City Road Chapel and premises, which have ever since been generally regarded as the centre and local home of Wesleyan Methodism.

CHAPTER IV.

FROM THE CONFERENCE OF 1777 TO THAT OF 1784.

The Conference of 1777. Inquiry into the state of the Connexion.

THE Conference of 1777, the thirty-fourth in order from the commencement, was held at Bristol, beginning on Tuesday, the 5th of August. It was conducted with great harmony, and concluded on Friday. Of it Wesley wrote in his "Journal," "I now particularly inquired (as the report had been spread far and wide) of every assistant, Have you reason to believe, from your own observation, that the Methodists are a fallen people? Is there a decay or an increase in the work of God where you have been? Are the Societies in general more dead or more alive to God than they were some years ago? The almost universal answer was, 'If we must *know them by their fruits*, there is no decay in the work of God among the people in general. The Societies are not dead to God: they are as much alive as they have been for many years. And we look on this report as a mere device of Satan, to make our hands hang down.'

"But, to come to a short issue, in most places the Methodists are still a poor, despised people, labouring under reproach and many inconveniences; therefore, wherever the power of God is not, they decrease. By this, then, you may form a sure judgment. Do the Methodists in general decrease in number? Then they decrease in grace; they are a fallen, or, at least, a falling, people. But they do not decrease in number; they continually increase: therefore they are not a fallen people."

This rumour would probably not have been regarded as of sufficient importance to call for such a careful and extended investigation, had it not been countenanced within the body, and even among the preachers. Nor did even the cheering result of the inquiry produce universal conviction. John Helton, who had been a minister in connexion with Wesley about thirteen years, and who travelled the preceding year in Bristol, declared that nothing he had heard had satisfied him that the report referred to was not substantially true; and, believing the Methodists to be falling, if not already fallen, he was determined to leave them. When this announcement was made, several of the preachers began to reason with him and persuade him; but Wesley stopped them, saying, "Let him go in peace." Helton soon after joined the Quakers.

From the above conversation it will appear, that Wesley's great concern was to maintain the genuine character of the work in which he was engaged. Of its continuance and progress he had no doubt; but he saw the importance of making that fact, so abundantly evident to himself, clear to others. And in the above extract from his "Journal" he has certainly placed the subject in a most convincing light. In the then circumstances of the Methodists, no power on earth could maintain their numbers without vital piety. There were no motives for adhesion to such a people but those which were directly religious.

The progress of the work.

At this Conference the number of the Circuits had increased, by the addition of Somerset, Alnwick, and Ballyshannon, to fifty-eight. The real increase of members in the three kingdoms was 1,351; although there was an apparent decrease in the total of this year, as compared with the last, of 1,797. The aggregate number now reported was 38,274; but from this number the American

Societies, which last year contained 3,148 members, were excluded. Mr. Fletcher was in Bristol during the sittings of this Conference, in his usual devout and zealous frame of mind. Mr. Benson observes, "We have had an edifying Conference. Mr. Fletcher's visit to-day and yesterday has been attended with a blessing. His appearance, his exhortations, and his prayers, broke most of our hearts, and filled us with shame and self-abasement for our little improvement." The most trivial incidents sometimes evince, in the clearest manner, the spirit of a Christian minister. The Rev. Joseph Benson records the following fact respecting this holy man: "He happened to be passing the door of the stable belonging to our chapel in Broad-mead, when I was alighting from my horse; and I shall never forget with what a heavenly air and sweet countenance he instantly came up to me in the stable, and, in the most solemn manner, putting his hands upon my head, as if he had been ordaining me for the sacred office of the ministry, prayed most fervently for and blessed me in the name of the Lord. To act in this way, indeed, toward his friends, was no uncommon thing with him; he was wont to do so frequently; and that in a manner so serious and devout, that it was almost impossible not to be deeply affected with it." *

Now, for the first time, Wesley recorded brief notices of those preachers who had died during the year. The record is as follows: "What preachers have died this year? *A. John Slocombe,* at *Clones,* an old labourer, worn out in the service. *John Harrison,* near *Lisburn,* a promising youth; serious, modest, and much devoted to God. *William Lumley,* at *Hexham,* a blessed young man, a happy witness of the full liberty of the children of God.

* Benson's "Life of Fletcher," p. 202. Edition of 1825.

And *William Minethorpe,* near *Dunbar,* 'an Israelite indeed, in whom was no guile.'" The propriety of inserting such characteristic notices was at once acknowledged, and they have been continued to the present time.

The American Conference, and state of Methodism in that country.

Although all direct intercourse with America was cut off, so that no notice of the Societies appears in the "Minutes," it is necessary now to state that the fifth American Conference was held in the Deer Creek meeting-house, Harford county, in the state of Maryland, May 20th, 1777. The war was raging with fearful violence, and the operations of Methodism were greatly impeded. On this account Virginia, one of the most prominent fields of labour, had been abandoned the year before; and at this time no preacher was stationed at New York,—the parent Society of American Methodism. The British army being in possession of the city, the troops converted the Methodist meeting-house into barracks. Yet these very unfavourable circumstances did not stay the good work. At this Conference there was reported an increase of 2,047 members and 12 preachers; the total number of members now in the American Societies being 6,968, and that of the preachers 36. Notwithstanding the earnestness and evident propriety of Wesley's advice to the preachers in that country, to abstain entirely from all meddling with political affairs, some of them seriously compromised themselves and the Societies. Mr. Rodda, while passing through his Circuit, was detected spreading the king's proclamation, and otherwise endeavouring to stir up a spirit of opposition to the American government. Alarmed, however, at the prospect of the consequences of this discovery, he, by the aid of some slaves, escaped to Philadelphia, then in possession of the British army, and, accompanied by Mr. Rankin, returned to Europe. Another circumstance

tended to expose American Methodim to persecution. A backslider from the Society, named Clowe, succeeded in enlisting three hundred men for the British army, and was the occasion of bloodshed before he was arrested. He was finally hung as a rebel against the government of the country. But, amid all these difficulties, Mr. Asbury stood firm to his duty and his flock.

Mr. James Rogers, and his remarkable interview with Mr. Fletcher.

This year Mr. James Rogers was appointed to East Cornwall; and being at the time in feeble health, he felt but ill able to endure the fatigue of the long removal from Edinburgh. Believing, however, that it was the will of God, he says, "I therefore set out in His name, and found sweet communion with Him in the way." His further account of an incident in this journey is too interesting to be omitted, especially as it refutes an error which was diligently circulated, and very forcibly shows the true Gospel consecration, to which, apart from all form or ceremony, real holiness leads. Mr. Rogers observes, "I had long desired to converse with that great and good man, Mr. Fletcher; and now an opportunity offered itself. Stopping at Bristol for a few days to rest myself and horse, I heard of his being at Mr. Ireland's, about three miles off, in a poor state of health, and, with two of my brethren, took a ride to see him. When we came there, he was returning from a ride, which he was advised by his physician to take every day. Dismounting from his horse, he came towards us with arms spread open and eyes lifted up to heaven. His apostolic appearance, with the whole of his deportment, amazingly affected us.

"The first words he spoke, while yet standing in the stable by his horse, were a part of the sixteenth chapter of St. John, most of which he repeated. And whilst he pointed out the descent of the Holy Ghost, as the great

promise of the Father, and the privilege of all New-Testament believers, in a manner I never had heard before, my soul was dissolved into tenderness, and became even as melting wax before the fire.

"As an invidious report had been spread that he had recanted what he had lately written against Calvinism in those excellent writings of his, entitled, 'Checks,' &c., I took the liberty to mention the report, and asked him what he thought had given rise to it. He replied, he could not tell, except that he had refrained from speaking on controverted points since he came to Mr. Ireland's; partly by reason of the poor state of his health, and because he did not wish to grieve his kind friend by making his house a field of controversy; but assured us he had never yet seen cause to repent of what he had written in defence of the Rev. Mr. Wesley's 'Minutes.' And though he believed his close application was the means of reducing his body to the state in which we then saw it, yet, if he fell a victim, it was in a good cause.

"After a little further conversation upon the universal love of God in Christ Jesus, we were about to take our leave, when Mr. Ireland sent his footman into the yard with a bottle of red wine and some slices of bread upon a waiter: we all uncovered our heads, while Mr. Fletcher craved a blessing upon the same; which he had no sooner done, than he handed first the bread to each, and then, lifting up his eyes to heaven, pronounced these words: 'The body of our Lord Jesus Christ, which was given for thee, preserve thy body and soul unto everlasting life.' Afterwards, handing the wine, he repeated, in like manner, 'The blood of our Lord Jesus Christ,' &c. But such a sacrament I never had before. A sense of the divine presence rested upon us all; and we were melted into floods of

tears. His worthy friend Mr. Ireland, grieved to see him exhaust his little strength by so much speaking, took him by the arm, and almost forced him into the house; while he kept looking wishfully, and speaking to us, as long as we could see him. We then mounted our horses and rode away. That very hour more than repaid me for my whole journey from Edinburgh to Cornwall."

Wesley's proposals for publishing a monthly Magazine.

It is more than probable that the debate in this Conference as to the religious stability of the Methodist body, and its issue in the retirement of John Helton, led Wesley to devise a new and most important agent for diffusing religious knowledge and influence throughout the Connexion, and for exhibiting its real character and condition to friends and foes. Immediately after this Conference, he drew up proposals for publishing a monthly periodical under the title of "The Arminian Magazine." The first number appeared on the 1st of January, 1778;* and the following

* The following characteristic notice is given on the cover of the first number, January 1st, 1778:—

"TO THE READER.

"It is usual, I am informed, for the compilers of Magazines, to employ the outside Covers in acquainting the courteous reader with the Beauties and Excellencies of what he will find within. I beg him to excuse me from this trouble: from writing panegyric upon myself. Neither can I desire my Friends to do it for me, in their recommendatory Letters. I am content this Magazine should stand or fall, by its own intrinsic value. If it is a compound of Falsehood, Ribaldry, and Nonsense, let it sink into oblivion. If it contains only the words of truth and soberness, then let it meet with a favourable reception.

"It is usual, likewise, with Magazine Writers, to speak of themselves in the plural number: '*We* will do this.' And, indeed, it is the general Custom of Great Men so to do. But I am a little one. Let me then be excused in this also, and permitted to speak as I am accustomed to do.

"*Lewisham*, "JOHN WESLEY."

"*Nov. 24th*, 1777."

Then, in smaller type, on the same page, follows this statement:—

"It will easily be observed, That this Magazine contains fewer Articles

is put forth in the Preface to the first volume as the plan of the work: "Each number will consist of four parts. First. A defence of the grand Christian doctrine, 'God willeth all men to be saved, and to come to the knowledge of the truth.' Secondly. An extract from the life of some holy man, whether Lutheran, Church-of-England man, Calvinist, or Arminian. Thirdly. Accounts and letters, containing the experience of pious persons, the greatest part of whom are still alive. And, Fourthly, Verses explaining or confirming the capital doctrines we have in view."

Wesley having projected the publication of the "Magazine," John Atlay, who had been previously appointed "to keep the accounts," was made "book-steward,"—an office now for the first time found in Methodism. Thomas Olivers is said, as heretofore, to "correct the *press*."

Wesley receives Dr. Coke into his Connexion. The Doctor's conversion.

As Wesley was pursuing his way to the west in the August of this year, he was again joined by Dr. Coke; and he says of the interview, "I went forward to Taunton with Dr. Coke, who, being dismissed from his curacy, had bid adieu to his honourable name, and determined to cast in his lot with us." * It seems that the young and ardent Doctor, partially enlightened as he was, had persevered in endeavouring to urge on his parishioners the knowledge

than any other. This is not by accident, but design. I have frequently been disgusted by the many bits and scraps of various kinds, which make up a great part of most publications of this nature. Before one has well entered upon any subject, it was at an end, and referred to the next Number: a mere trick to decoy the reader to buy another and another Number. On the contrary, I shall endeavour to begin and conclude as many things as possible in each Number; and with regard to taking the Numbers that follow, let every Reader use his own Discretion."

(*Communicated by the* Rev. John Kirk.)

* Wesley's "Journal," vol. iv., p. 103.

and practice of religion, until their opposition became so violent that he was dismissed from his curacy. Having achieved this victory, his opponents determined to enjoy it: so, having obtained a knowledge of "the day he was to leave the town, the bells were rung, and some hogsheads of cider were brought into the street, that those who were so disposed might rejoice in the deliverance of the parish from its Methodist curate."

Afterwards the Doctor joined Wesley on his way to Taunton, and on his return accompanied him to Bristol. Here, among a people established in the faith, Dr. Coke's gentlemanly manners, zeal for religion, and ardent attachment to Wesley, gained him universal love and esteem. He was now instructed in the discipline and usages of the Society with which he had become connected, and had to take his part in all their meetings. On these occasions he listened to Christian experience, to which he was himself a stranger; and not unfrequently, without being conscious of the cause, he found himself in a situation somewhat like that described by Dr. Edwards of New England, in his "Considerations on the Work of God" in that province. "How melancholy," observes that great and good man, "is the case of one who is to act as a shepherd and guide to a people, many of whom are under great awakenings, and many are filled with divine light, love, and joy; to undertake to instruct and lead them all, under those various circumstances; to be put to it to play the hypocrite, and force the airs of a saint in preaching, and from time to time in private conversation; and, in particular dealing with souls, to undertake to judge of their circumstances, to talk to those who come to him, as if he knew what they said; to try to talk with persons of experience, as if he had experience as well as they; to force a joyful

countenance and manner of speech, when there is nothing in the heart! What sorrowful work is here! O, how miserable must such persons feel! What wretched slavery is this! Besides the infinite provocation of the Most High God, and displeasure of his Lord and Master!" The case of Dr. Coke, who truly wished to do good, was, however, not so lamentable. He was not in the condition of an ungodly minister, who, for a living, undertakes such a work. The Doctor had no stipend, his own fortune being sufficient for his support; and, not being convinced of sin, he felt no such misery. He did not, indeed, like Dr. Southey and others, suppose that those people laboured under a mental disease; on the contrary, he supposed them sincere and of a sound mind; but he comforted himself with his own supposed advantages. "They have," he said to himself, "a knowledge of God among them which is strange to me; but in philanthropy, and in large views for the good of mankind, I am superior to them."

Dr. Coke had not in early youth, like Wesley, the advantage of a religious education. He was, besides, an only son, and had been greatly indulged; was naturally aspiring and ambitious, and fondly imagined the outgoings of an ardent and benevolent temperament, which he felt stirring within him, was that pure and holy charity which the love of God in Christ alone can impart. It pleased the great Head of the Church, by placing him in contact with the Methodists, to afford him the means of rescue from this error, and, by a very simple but singular incident, to make the urgent necessity of this deliverance very evident. As he was on his way to London from Bristol, "one of the passengers in the coach in which he travelled was taken in a fit; and as there was an immediate cry for water, the Doctor ran to a brook which he saw at some

distance. Having no vessel, he thought of his hat; but on beholding the fine new beaver decorated with an elegant rose, then common with clergymen, his heart, which he had supposed so large, instantly failed him, and he returned in haste to the scene of distress. A gentlemen who was assisting the afflicted man, and had observed with pleasure the Doctor's design, exclaimed, with surprise and indignation, 'What, Sir! Have you brought no water?' and instantly ran to the brook, and returned with his hat full.

"The Doctor felt his situation, in the presence of the passengers; but his inward mortification was inexpressible. He had trusted in himself that he was righteous, and had despised, or, at least, lightly esteemed, others;" but he found himself utterly destitute of any ground for these lofty imaginations. His delusion had passed away, and with a wounded spirit he arrived in London.

The change which passed in Dr. Coke's mind disposed him to listen to the communications of the Methodist people with increased interest. And as he thought of their confidence and joy, his own "trouble increased. He found himself to be what our Lord calls 'a stranger' in the fellowship of His people. The Holy Spirit, who, by fastening one wrong act on the mind of a sinner, can, in the issue, as in the case of the Samaritan woman, convince him of 'all that ever he did,' now showed him that 'in him dwelt no good thing.'" Yet he pined and groaned in secret: for he could not lay open his spiritual misery to the Christians with whom he had so recently become acquainted. He was, indeed, stripped of all that self-sufficiency which at Bristol had shielded him from conviction. He now felt that he had undertaken a work for which he was wholly unfit, and he saw no way of deliverance.

One great obstacle to making known his state of mind was, that his friends had assumed that he was truly con-

verted, and walking in the light of the divine countenance. Wesley himself and all his people fully believed this; so that the Doctor seemed shut up in deep penitential sorrow.

The Lord, however, found a way for his deliverance. Mr. Thomas Maxfield, although he had separated from Wesley, on hearing of the arrival of Dr. Coke, called on him, and, with his usual promptness and energy, inquired into the state of his mind. His question did not refer to his justification,—in common with others, he assumed him to have attained that blessing,—but he inquired if he were perfected in love: and on the Doctor's acknowledging that he had not attained that privilege, "Mr. Maxfield immediately pressed it upon him with all his might, showing, in his usual strong way, that the blessing was to be received by faith, and, consequently, that it might and ought to be received now. The Doctor was amazed and much embarrassed. He got away, however, from his vehement exhorter as well as he could, informing him that he would maturely consider what had been advanced, and make it a matter of prayer.

"The Doctor did so; and an intimacy took place between them, the consequence of which was, that through the instrumentality of that extraordinary man the Doctor found rest unto his soul. He obtained that faith which gave his labouring conscience peace; and which, in a mind naturally so ardent, raised him up as on the wings of eagles. He joined from that time in all the exercises of religion with a fervour that surprised many, and caused the people to whom he ministered to glorify God on his behalf."*

From henceforth Dr. Coke became a most valuable auxiliary to Wesley. He no longer confined himself to the regular duties of a clergyman, but took part in all the

* Moore's "Life of Wesley," vol. ii., pp. 310–315.

work of a Methodist preacher, preaching abroad and in all the chapels, exhorting all with a zeal almost equal to that of Mr. Maxfield himself: "instant in season, and out of season," no labours seemed too much for him, no journeys too fatiguing; so that he used to say he was to him as a right hand. And what enhanced the importance of the Doctor's aid, Wesley could trust him, which was not fully the case with some of his most useful preachers. Wesley himself told the Rev. Henry Moore, that while Mr. Maxfield was with him, he could not, when himself absent from London, leave him there, unless Dr. Jones was there also. For the first so limited his exhortation to the exercise of faith, that the presence of the other was necessary, whose peculiar talent it was to enforce the fruits of faith and the duties of the Gospel. With Dr. Coke it was otherwise; he was equally "sound in the faith," and "zealous of good works."

First Conference in Ireland. Its discussions.

At the end of Wesley's journey through Ireland, on Tuesday, July 7th, 1778, he held a Conference in that island. Respecting it he says, "Our little Conference began, at which about twenty preachers were present." At this time the question of separating from the Church was revived with great earnestness and zeal by Mr. Edward Smyth. He had previously been expelled from a church in the north of Ireland for his faithful proclamation of the Gospel, and was now preaching in connexion with Wesley. He laboured with all his might to persuade him to repudiate all connexion with the Establishment; but he failed. The discussion ended in the following questions and answers: "*Q.* Is it not our duty to separate from the Church, considering the wickedness both of the clergy and the people? *A.* We conceive not. 1. Because both the priests and the people were full as wicked in the Jewish church, and yet

God never commanded the holy Israelites to separate from them. 2. Neither did our Lord command His disciples to separate from them; He rather commanded the contrary. 3. Hence it is clear *that* could not be the meaning of St. Paul's words, 'Come out from among them, and be ye separate.'" This answer was followed by another question, the reply to which was evidently intended to prevent such discussions in future. "*Q.* Have we a right view of our work? *A.* Perhaps not. It is not to take care of this or that Society, or to preach so many times; but to save as many souls as we can, to bring as many sinners as we can to repentance, and with all our power to build them up in that holiness, without which they cannot see the Lord." *

George Lowe preaches his first sermon.

In August, 1777, George Lowe, afterwards a zealous and useful Methodist minister, preached his first sermon. His simple account of the circumstance shows how the work of God then advanced in the absence of those external things which are generally regarded as essential to order and propriety. He observes, "My dress on that occasion was not very clerical; but, although it would have offended the fastidious taste of modern times, it was considered fashionable, and even elegant, in those days. I rose earlier than usual on that morning, spent some time in communion with God, in reading the Scriptures, and in looking over my subject. I then put on my fustian coat, a pretty red plush waistcoat, and a handsome pair of leather breeches. Thus equipped, I left home, in much weakness and fear, to make, what appeared to me, a dangerous experiment. On arriving at Saltersford, I found the preaching-house crowded; but, being there a few minutes before the time, I stepped into an ante-chamber, for the purpose of composing my mind

* Myles's "Chronological History," p 136.

and imploring the aid of divine grace. While I was there, a sharp shock of an earthquake occurred. It shook and rocked the building, and spread such alarm amongst the people, that before I commenced the service, they were crying out, 'God be merciful to us sinners.'" His biographer adds, "The text chosen on that occasion was Matt. viii. 2, 3. He represented the leper as being the type of the sinner; and pointed out the loathsome, infectious, and dangerous nature of his malady. He then adverted to the humility, importunity, and faith which characterized his appeal to the Saviour; and, finally, called their attention to the frank, gratuitous, and complete cure effected by the word and touch of our Lord. During the delivery of this discourse, there was an abundant communication of the grace of God to assist the preacher and bless the people; so that, before the close of the service, Mr. Lowe's voice could scarcely be heard amidst the loud and pathetic supplications for divine mercy. Several scores were awakened under that sermon, many of whom afterward joined the Society, and continued in future years 'to adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things.'"*

As Wesley, with or without the advice of the Conference, appointed the preachers to their several spheres of action, so his assistant in each Circuit, having obtained the best available information, appointed the times and places where he and his colleagues and the local preachers should preach. This appears to have been the practice from the beginning.

Preachers' plans.

In the early stages of Methodistic progress it is reasonable to suppose that this would be done at best in a very irregular manner; but afterward these appointments were made on a regular plan. The earliest of these which we

* Rev. A. Strachan's "Life and Times of the Rev. George Lowe."

have seen is of this date, (1777,) for the local preachers of the Leeds Circuit from May 4th to July 27th inclusive. At this time, and for many years afterward, the plans of the itinerant and local preachers were quite separate and distinct from each other. There is another peculiarity about the plans of that Circuit from this period until some years after 1800: the several places supplied with Sunday preaching by the local preachers were visited by them on one Sabbath in a fortnight. That is, the Circuit was divided into two sections, each of which was supplied on alternate Sundays. A copy of this plan, and the names of the local preachers, so far as they can be ascertained, will be found elsewhere.*

Two females allowed by Wesley to preach.

Miss Bosanquet was not the only female preacher permitted to labour occasionally among the Methodists at this time: Mrs. Crosby, of Leeds, her former pupil and a sister spirit, pursued a precisely similar course, and was very useful. It is not known whether the following letter from Wesley to this pious female has been already published; but its importance justifies its insertion: the MS. is still preserved.

"LONDON, *December 2nd*, 1777.

"MY DEAR SISTER,

"I HOPE you will always have your time much filled up. You will, unless you grow weary of well-doing. For is not the harvest plenteous still? Had we ever a larger field of action? And shall we stand all, or any part of, the day idle? Then we should wrong both our neighbour and our own souls.

"For the sake of retrenching her expenses, I thought it quite needful for Miss B—— to go from home; and I was likewise persuaded (as she was herself) that God had some-

* See Appendix F, at the end of this volume.

thing for her to do in Bath and Kingswood; perhaps in Bristol too; although I do not think she will be called to speak *there* in public.

"The difference between us and the Quakers in this respect is manifest. They flatly deny the rule itself, although it stands clear in the Bible. We allow the rule; only we believe it admits of some exceptions. At present I know of those, and no more, in the whole Methodist Connexion. You should (send) word of what our Lord is doing where you go, to, dear Sally,

"Yours affectionately,

"JOHN WESLEY."

It is evident, therefore, that Wesley did not merely connive at female preachers; he gave them his direct and formal sanction, when, as in these two cases, he was convinced they were called of God. He regarded their call as an extraordinary exception to the general rule laid down by St. Paul,—a rule which, as he says, he fully allowed.

Mrs. Fletcher's preaching at Huddersfield.

Mrs. Fletcher gives the following account of her preaching at Huddersfield. She had called there on her way to Golcar, where she was going to preach, and was pressed to hold a meeting there on her return, to which she assented. On her way back to Huddersfield, however, Mr. Taylor, who was with her, expressed doubts as to the propriety of her stopping there, as he said there were some who did not like women to conduct public worship, and that she might in consequence meet with something disagreeable. "When we got to Huddersfield, I told them the conversation we had had by the way, and the posture of my mind, which was as calm as the limpid stream and quiet as an infant. I perceived his fears were not groundless, and said, 'Well, my friends, I will do as you will,—either stay with you this

night, or go forward directly: for I follow a lamb-like Lord, and I would imitate His life and spirit.' They said they believed but few of the principal persons had any objection, and the people much desired it; besides, as it had been given out at noon, there would be a great many strangers whom it would not be well to disappoint. It was then agreed that we should have the meeting in the house where they usually had the preaching; but when we came there, the crowd was so very great, and the place so hot, that I feared I should not be able to speak at all. I stood still, and left all to God. A friend gave out a hymn, during which some fainted away. Brother Taylor said, 'I perceive it impossible for us to stay within doors: the people cannot bear the heat, and there are more without than there are within.' We then came out. My head swam with the heat. I scarce knew which way I went, but seemed carried along by the people till we stopped at a horse-block placed against a wall on the side of the street, with a plain wide opening before it. On the steps of this I stood, and gave out,—

'Come, ye sinners, poor and needy,' &c.

While the people were singing the hymn, I felt a renewed conviction to speak in the name of the Lord. My bodily strength seemed to return each moment. I felt no weariness, and my voice was stronger than in the morning, while I was led to enlarge on these words: 'The Lord is our Judge, the Lord is our Lawgiver, the Lord is our King. He will save us.' Deep solemnity sat on every face. I think there was scarce a cough to be heard, or the least motion, though the number gathered was very great. So solemn a time I have seldom known. My voice was clear enough to reach them all. And when we concluded, I felt

stronger than when we began. They then desired me to speak to each of the women joined in Society, which took me till near ten." *

The thirty-fourth Conference was held at Leeds, August 4th, 1778. A larger number of preachers attended than at any previous one. It began on Tuesday morning, and continued till Saturday. Mr. Benson says, "it was the best Conference he ever attended; that Mr. Wesley possessed an excellent spirit, and preached remarkably well."

The Conference of 1778. Application to send missionaries to Africa.

On the second day a proposal was made for sending missionaries to Africa. This proposal arose out of the case of two young princes, who had been torn away from Calabar, on the Coast of Guinea, and sold as slaves to America, where they remained upwards of seven years. An English master of a ship, to whom they had told their story, pitied them, and advised them to run away, and come with him to England. Their case was brought before Lord Mansfield, and they were declared free, and set at liberty. By the kindness of the Methodists at Bristol, they were instructed in the English language and the truths of Christianity, and afterward sent back to their own country. After their return, at their request, two persons who were Germans, but members of the Methodist Society in Bristol, were sent out to Guinea, evidently with a view to their instructing the people in the truths of the Christian faith; but they both died before or soon after their landing on that coast. The young princes then sent over petitions that others might come to their aid for the same purpose; and when the subject was mentioned in the Conference, two pious young men freely offered themselves for this difficult and dangerous service. "But after

* Walker's "Methodism in Halifax," p. 147.

the matter was seriously considered, it was concluded that the time had not arrived for sending missionaries to Africa." Mr. Benson concludes the narrative of the circumstance by observing, "What was said on this occasion, and the prayers which followed, were manifestly attended with a great blessing; and the Lord was present of a truth." *

State of the Connexion.

The Circuits were now increased to sixty; but this addition arose out of numerous alterations. Devon, Somersetshire, Alnwick, and Ballyshannon ceased to be Circuits; and Taunton, Tiverton, Isle of Man, Castlebar, Lisleen, and Belfast were made Circuits. The numbers reported, including 6,968 for America, were 47,057; † and as the aggregate of the last year, when the numbers from America were not entered, was 38,274, there was an increase in the Societies of Great Britain and Ireland of 1,815.

Two preachers died this year: Thomas Hosking, a pious, zealous, active young man, just entering on his work; and Richard Burke, a man of faith and patience, made perfect through sufferings.

The examination into the character and ability of each preacher was very strictly conducted, and two were laid aside. Sundry exhortations and directions were put forth in the "Minutes" for visiting gaols, renewing trust-deeds where many of the trustees were dead, and for preventing the preachers from contracting nervous disorders.

Dr. Coke appears on the "Minutes" for the first time, and was stationed at London, although not as a regular preacher on the Circuit; the entry standing thus :—

* "Memoirs of the Rev. Joseph Benson," by MACDONALD, p. 76.

† This is not the total printed in the "Minutes," but a correct aggregate of the numbers in the several Circuits. The totals in the "Minutes" are frequently erroneous.

"LONDON: John Pawson, Thomas Rankin, Thomas Tennant, Peter Jaco, *Super.*, John Wesley, Thomas Coke, John Abraham."

It seems clear, also, from what follows, that Wesley intended Dr. Coke this year for more special service. For, immediately after the Conference, an entry is found in his "Journal," saying, "Monday, August 17th, Dr. Coke, my brother, and I took coach for Bristol; and early on Thursday, 20th, I set out for Cornwall."

Wesley opens City Road Chapel.

On Sunday, November 1st, Wesley conducted the opening services of the New Chapel in City Road. He writes respecting it, that "it is perfectly neat, but not fine; and contains far more people than the Foundery; I believe, together with the Morning Chapel, as many as the Tabernacle. Although multitudes attended on this occasion, there was no disturbance: every thing was conducted with quietness, decency, and order." Wesley preached in the morning from part of Solomon's prayer at the dedication of the temple, and in the afternoon from "the hundred and forty and four thousand standing with the Lamb on Mount Zion." He adds, "God was eminently present in the midst of the congregation."

When it is considered that few of the Methodists of this day had any preliminary teaching, it is wonderful that they remained so united, and were so seldom subject to scenes of contention and disorder. Men and women of the most diverse opinions and judgment on almost every other subject, were here of one mind and heart, because they felt their need of salvation; and their continued desire for this, and growing interest in its blessings, generally rose paramount over every difference of sentiment, and kept them in one united band of brotherhood. There were, however, occasional exceptions to this happy state of things.

We meet with one at this time, at Halifax, which would be amusing but for its sad religious results.

Opening of a new chapel at Halifax. Contentions and secession from the Society.

In the year 1777, the Society of this town, by a great and united effort, erected a new chapel at an expense of about £1,230. In this work all appear to have heartily united, and exulted in its accomplishment. The chapel being finished, it was opened by Wesley and Mr. Thomas Taylor. For the sake either of ornament or of use, a sounding-board was placed over the pulpit; and several of the congregation, thinking the board had a meagre appearance, hit upon a scheme to remedy the defect. A subscription was opened, and an angel blowing a trumpet was placed over the sounding-board. At the sight of such a figure, with expanded wings, and a tremendous trumpet in its hand, the congregation were greatly astonished when they assembled on the following Sabbath. The angel became a subject of much contention in the Society; and the dispute was seriously aggravated by the declaration of Mr. John Murlin, one of the newly appointed preachers, that he would preach under it no more. In the midst of this contention, Wesley again visited Halifax, and the following entry is found in his "Journal:" "Thursday, April 15th, 1779, I went to Halifax, where a little thing had occasioned a great disturbance. An angel blowing a trumpet was placed on the sounding-board over the pulpit. Many were vehemently against this; others as vehemently for it: but a total end was soon put to the contest; for the angel vanished away. The congregations, morning and evening, were very large; and the work of God seems to increase in depth as well as extent."

How the angel vanished, and the consequences, must, however, be told. On the evening of the day just named, Wesley, in order to settle the dispute, called the leaders

together after service. A hot discussion ensued as to whether the angel should be retained or destroyed; but when the votes were taken, they were found to be equal. At this juncture, John Hatton, of Lightcliffe, came into the room, and, on the proceedings being explained to him, he gave his vote for the destruction of the angel. In a few minutes the angel disappeared from the sounding-board; Mr. Murlin hewed the "Dagon" in pieces; and before midnight its ashes were smouldering in the chapel yard. Wesley, from his well known antipathy to a sounding-board, intimated his wish that it also might be removed. On the morning following, at the five o'clock preaching, great was the consternation of the people, when they beheld the pulpit in its original plainness, being *minus* both the sounding-board and its gorgeous appendage.

It is, however, painful to add, that although the angel had only been in the chapel two Sundays, its removal caused a division in the Society; several influential members left, and some of them were never afterward connected with any Church. Wesley appears not to have been made aware of all the consequences of this contention.* How fearful are the results of strife in a religious Society!

Although the war with America was continued with all the energy which the British ministry could command, the revolted colonists were daily getting the advantage in the conflict: the Congress was accordingly encouraged to assume, in the fullest sense, the sovereignty of the country. The inhabitants of the several States were in consequence required to take an oath of allegiance to the existing government. Mr. Asbury, as an Englishman, could not conscientiously comply with this demand. He had, there-

* WALKER'S "Methodism in Halifax," p. 150.

Noble efforts of Mr. Asbury and other preachers in America. The American Conference.

fore, to retire from his usual course of ministerial duty, and seek concealment. He lived in the house of a friend, Judge White, for nearly twelve months. Yet even in these circumstances his zeal could not be inactive; for, when unable to appear in the day-time, he would emerge from his retreat in the gloom of night, and go from house to house, enforcing the great truths of the Gospel.

His efforts were nobly seconded by a native American preacher, Freeborn Garretson, whose ministry was abundantly owned of God throughout the States of Maryland and Delaware, and who endured cruel usage and much persecution. Joseph Hartley was another devoted minister in those times of trial. When forbidden to preach, he duly attended his appointments; and after singing and prayer, remaining upon his knees, he exhorted the people with so much earnestness and power, that his enemies said, "He might as well preach on his feet, as on his knees." Afterward, in Talbot county, he was seized, and committed to jail for preaching; but this by no means silenced him; for the people gathered around the gate, and he preached from the inside with so much unction and power, that the inhabitants said, unless Hartley was released from prison, he would convert the whole town. After some time, he was set at liberty; but a blessed revival of the work of God resulted from his efforts whilst in prison, which was the means of establishing a flourishing Society.

The American Conference of this year was held in Leesburgh: Mr. Asbury being in ill health, and every other English preacher having left America, William Watts, the oldest American preacher, presided. At this time, five Circuits were left off the "Minutes," in consequence of the war: New York, Philadelphia, Chester, Frederick, and Norfolk. To counterbalance this loss, six new Circuits

were formed: Berkeley, Fluvanna, James City, and Lunenburgh, in Virginia; and Carolina Circuit, in North Carolina, was divided into three, namely, Roanoke, Tar River, and New Hope. The fearful consequences of the war were, however, seen in the decrease of 873 members and 5 preachers; the numbers now reported being 6,095 members and 29 preachers.

It will serve to show the steadiness with which Wesley kept his eye fixed on the great evangelical object for which he had laboured throughout his life, to quote the notice of his visit to Arbroath this year. "I examined the Society. In five years I found five members had been gained! ninety-nine being increased to a hundred and four. What, then, have our preachers been doing all this time? 1. They have preached four evenings in the week, and on Sunday morning; the other mornings they have fairly given up. 2. They have taken great care not to speak too plain, lest they should give offence. 3. When Mr. Brackenbury preached the old Methodist doctrine, one of them said, 'You must not preach such doctrine here. The doctrine of perfection will not do for the meridian of Edinburgh.' Waving, then, all other hinderances, is it any wonder that the work of God has not prospered here?" * A thoroughly religious and authoritative supervision of this kind must have been productive of the happiest results. Wesley was, indeed, to all intents and purposes a primitive and apostolic BISHOP.

As, in accordance with the principle involved in all such communications as those we have just quoted from Wesley, our views of Methodism go beyond its organization and annals to its religious results, we find it necessary occasionally to relate such incidents as the following, and they might be multiplied almost indefinitely. They are inserted, only

* WESLEY'S "Journal," June 17th, 1779.

when necessary to exhibit the nature of the work, and confirmed by undoubted authority.

The case of Abraham Brierly.

On January 11th, 1779, Mr. Benson writes, "This evening I preached on occasion of the death of Abraham Brierly, a very exemplary Christian; who, for many years, adorned the Gospel. From a child he feared God, and was preserved by His grace from all open sin. As he grew up, he regularly attended church and sacrament; was honest in his dealings, and unblameable in his whole behaviour. But, notwithstanding the regularity of his conduct, he was far from being satisfied with his state; and hence he went to several clergymen to request their directions. Still he did not find rest to his soul, but, on the contrary, grew more and more uneasy; till at last, having little or no hope of salvation, he was strongly tempted to lay violent hands upon himself. In this state, he went to Mr. Lee, a clergyman, who gave him some encouragement by saying, 'I know not what advice to give you, because I never was in your state; but, I assure you, I wish I was in it, as I am satisfied that they who sow in tears shall reap in joy.' Some years after this, he had a faint hope that God would be gracious to him, but had no evidence of His pardoning mercy, nor heart-felt peace and joy in believing. At length, when he was upwards of forty years of age, as he went along a street one evening, he heard some people singing a hymn or psalm in a house. While he stood and listened, he thought, 'Surely these people know more of religion than I.' He afterwards, upon inquiry, learned that they were Methodists, then generally reckoned the worst description of schismatics; but this did not deter him from hearing one of their preachers on the following Monday evening. In the course of less than a week, he heard one of them preach again. On his way to hear the second

time, he was stopped short in the street by a sudden suggestion, that God would be offended, if he went. In this dilemma, he lifted up his heart to God, and prayed that if they were not His people, and if it was wrong to go among them, He would prevent his going; but if otherwise, that He would remove those fears, and incline him to go forward, by giving him to feel love to them. This prayer was immediately answered; for he felt his fears dispelled, and his mind disposed to proceed; and, whilst amongst them upon that occasion, he felt that he loved them most cordially. His master, who employed him to dye fustian, learned that he went to hear the Methodists, and, being much displeased with him on that account, threatened to turn him out of his employment, if he went to hear them any more. He assured his master that he had received much benefit by going only twice to hear them; and as he knew they preached the truth, he was determined to hear them at all events. His master fulfilled his threatening. But the Lord made him ample amends for this outward loss, by inward consolation; for, within the day after, he was filled with joy and peace in believing. From that happy period of his life, to his latest hour, he walked in all the commandments of the Lord blameless. For the support of himself and family, he submitted to drive a cart with coals, in which humble situation he continued till his last sickness confined him to his house; where, after suffering for some time, he died in the Lord." Yet, if we are to adopt the opinions of *philosophers*, this change of heart, this holy life, and this happy death were all of them the results of disease.*

The thirty-sixth Conference was opened in London,

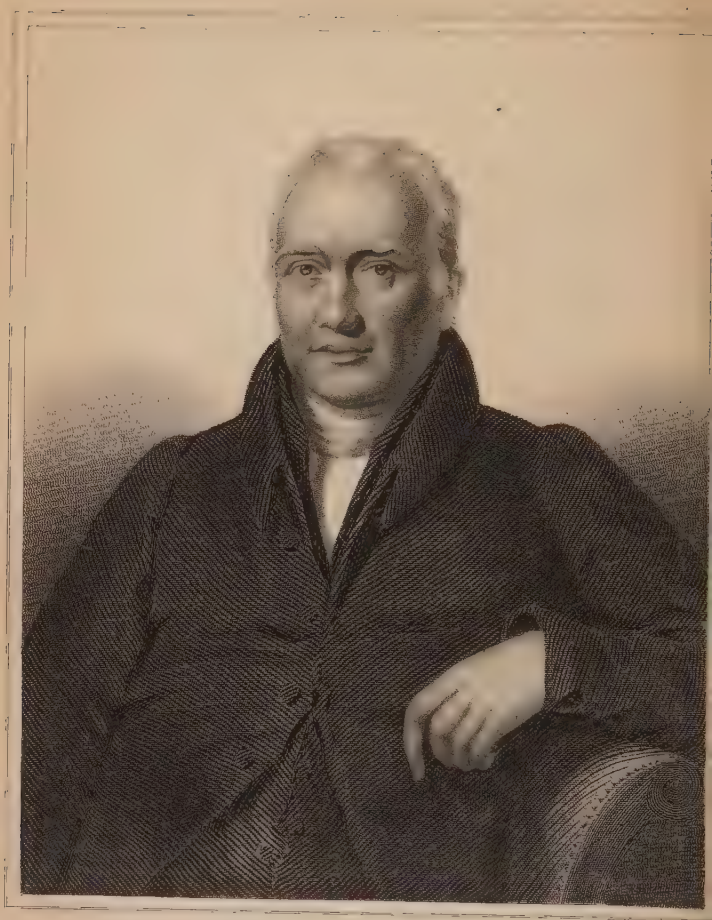
* "Memoirs of the Rev. J. Benson," edition of 1825, p. 84.

The Conference of 1779. Decrease of members in many Circuits. Inquiries into the cause.

August 3rd, 1779. Wesley simply says of it, "Our Conference began, which continued and ended in peace and love." The number of the Circuits was now increased to sixty-two by the addition of Northamptonshire as a Circuit in England, and Inverness in Scotland. The number of members in the Societies this year was 42,486; and as last year's return, excluding America, gave 40,089, there was in the home Societies an increase of 2,397.

Among the preachers admitted on trial at this Conference we find the name of Henry Moore, who afterward filled a highly honourable position in the Connexion. Two preachers died this year: "George Shorter, of whom it is said, 'He was an Israelite indeed,' a lively, zealous, active man, a witness of full salvation;" and "James Gaffney, a young man of considerable abilities, wise above his years." He died of rapid consumption; "but was fully delivered from the fear of death, and was unspeakably happy, though in violent pain, till his spirit returned to God."

Notwithstanding the increase in the Connexion generally, there was a decrease in many Circuits, which circumstance led to very searching inquiries at this Conference. On this head the following appears in the "Minutes:" "*Q.* How can we account for the decrease in so many Circuits this year? *A.* It may be owing, partly to want of preaching abroad, and of trying new places; partly to prejudice against the king, and *speaking evil of dignities;* but chiefly to the increase of worldly-mindedness and conformity to the world. *Q.* How can we stop this evil speaking? *A.* Suffer none that speak evil of those in authority, or that prophesy evil to the nation, to preach with us. Let every assistant take care of this." The judgment of the founder of Methodism, as to the causes which produced the first general decrease of numbers,



Adam Clarke

ought to have weight with the members of the body in all succeeding times. Methodists should never forget that it was to the influence of evil speaking, especially of those in authority, of worldly-mindedness, and conformity to the world, that Wesley attributed the first great check to the progress of the work of God in Methodism.

The troubled condition of the country appears also to have affected the pecuniary resources of the Connexion. The want of money was severely felt; and, to put the funds on a better footing, it was resolved to make a permanent alteration. Hitherto a portion of the Yearly Subscription had been appropriated to aid in paying off chapel debts. This course was now discontinued. It was, therefore, formally announced: "1. Let every Circuit bear its own burden, and not *lean* upon the Conference. 2. Tell every one expressly, 'We do not make a subscription for paying debts.' 3. Let all the assistants in Ireland do the same as those in England."

The state of the work in Scotland engaged especial attention; and the Conference advised the preachers stationed there to "preach abroad as much as possible; try every town and village; and visit every member of every Society at home." Immediately after this Conference, August 8th, 1779, Wesley recorded these words in his "Journal:" "This was the last night which I spent at the Foundery. What hath God wrought there in forty years!" No surprise at this record can be felt by any considerate reader. The Foundery was the first place where Wesley could, without interference or opposition, preach the Gospel of Christ according to the light which he had received,—the place which had indeed been the seat and centre of Methodism,—the head-quarters of Wesley during the evangelical labours of forty years, and such labours as no minister in

Wesley leaves the Foundery for City Road Chapel.

England had ever previously put forth. Let us contemplate Wesley's first entry into this tabernacle after he had been thrust out of the churches, and been stigmatized as a fanatical teacher of heresy; and then turn to the venerable minister leaving that place for the neat and commodious premises in City Road, supported by hundreds of noble-minded and godly preachers, his sons in the Gospel, and followed with blessings by at least fifty thousand members in England and America. Well might he exclaim, "What hath God wrought!" These circumstances will perpetuate the memory of the Foundery in the minds of the Wesleyan people. We, therefore, gladly annex a faithful representation of this venerable building, with an account of its precise locality.*

* "It stood in the locality called 'Windmill Hill,' Upper Moorfields, London; and which is now known by the name of Windmill Street,—a street that runs parallel with City Road, and abuts on the north-west corner of Finsbury Square. The chapel was on the east side of the street, some sixteen or eighteen yards from Providence Row; and the entire premises occupied a space of ground measuring about one hundred and twenty or thirty feet in front, from north to south, and about one hundred feet in depth, from east to west.

"The chapel, as seen in the engraving, is the front building with two doors. The proper entrance to it was by the door on the left hand, and the general entrance to the premises, to the preacher's house, school, band-room, &c., was by the door on the right hand, where the school children are represented as going in. There was a plain belfry on the gable at the further end, in which there hung a bell that was rung every morning at five o'clock, for early service, and every evening at nine, for family worship; as well as at sundry other times. There were no pews in the chapel; but on the ground floor, immediately before the pulpit, there were some ten or twelve seats with back rails, appropriated, with the exception of the first and the last, to the female worshippers. Under the front gallery were the free seats for the females; and under the side galleries the free seats for males. The front gallery was used exclusively by females; and the side galleries by males.

"The band-room was behind the chapel, on the ground floor. It was

THE FIRST METHODIST CHAPEL, CALLED "THE FOUNDERY."

Methodism in the Isle of Wight.

Preaching by the Methodist itinerants was now permanently established in the Isle of Wight. They had frequently visited the Island long before; indeed, so early as 1753 Wesley was there, and thus relates an account of his visit in his "Journal:" "Tuesday, July 10th, 1753. —I went on board a hoy, and in three hours landed at Cowes, in the Isle of Wight. We rode straight to Newport, the chief town in the Isle, and found a little Society in tolerable order. Several of them had found peace with God. One told me that it was about eight years since she first knew her interest in Christ, by means of one who called there on his way to Pennsylvania; but having none to speak to, or advise with, she was long tormented with doubts and fears. After some years, she received a fresh manifestation of His love, and could not doubt or fear any more. She is now confined to her bed, and consuming away with pining sickness. But all is good to her; for

some eighty feet long and twenty feet wide, and accommodated about three hundred persons. It was used for the five o'clock morning service, in the winter season; and the bands met in it on a Thursday evening, after the week-night preaching. United intercession and prayer meetings were also held in it, on Wednesdays and Fridays, at two o'clock. The north end of the room was used for a school, being fitted up with desks, &c.; and at the south end was the Book Room for the sale of Mr. Wesley's publications.

"Mr. Wesley had his apartments in a building over the band-room, which appears in the engraving elevated in a houselike form over the chapel. His study was at the right-hand corner. The dwelling-house was at the end of the chapel, next the gable with the belfry, and was occupied by assistant preachers, and by the domestics. The entrance to it, as before stated, was through the chapel. The smaller buildings, immediately on the left, are the coach-house and stable: the former, next the gateway; and the latter, next the band-room, where the door and windows are seen over the wall.

"It was on the Foundery premises that the first Methodist Society was formed, and the first Methodist Conference held."—Rev. Dr. Jobson's "Chapel and School Architecture," p. 48.

she has learned in every thing to give thanks. At half an hour after six I preached in the market-place to a numerous congregation, but they were not as serious as those at Portsmouth; many children made such a noise, and many grown persons were talking aloud almost all the time I was preaching. It was quite the reverse at five in the morning: there was a large congregation again, and every person therein seemed to know this was the word whereby God would judge them in the last day." He again visited the Isle in October of the same year, and preached repeatedly to large congregations with apparent success; and observes, on leaving, "Surely if there were any here to preach the word of God with power, a multitude would soon be obedient to the faith." Again, in 1758, Wesley visited and preached on the Island. But the fruits of these efforts perished for lack of regular preaching and pastoral attention.

For reasons which are not apparent, the preachers and Society at Winchester, the head of the Circuit, were by no means zealous in affording it stated ministerial labour. Even at this time, (1779,) it was in opposition to their views, and as the result of Wesley's personal determination, that the Island was favoured with a regular supply of preachers.

Great dissension among the Methodists of America.

The war which still raged between the British and the Americans, greatly harassed the operations of the Methodist ministers. These evils were now aggravated by a serious schism amongst the Methodists in that country. On the breaking out of hostilities, most of the clergymen of the Established Church returned home, and those who remained were not generally regular in their lives, or evangelical in their teaching. Although many urged a different course, the Methodist preachers in America had

hitherto adhered to that which had been followed from the beginning in England; namely, to regard the Societies as a part of the Established Church, and all their evangelical agency as auxiliary thereto: they had accordingly abstained from administering the sacraments. Now, however, circumstances were so greatly changed, that several of the preachers thought the time had fully come when they ought themselves to administer those ordinances. They urged that in many large districts there was no episcopally ordained minister; that great numbers of children were left unbaptized, and the Societies at large were deprived of the Lord's Supper. The people generally participated in the judgment of these preachers. This measure was urged at the Deer Creek Conference, the last at which Mr. Rankin presided, when it was resolved to delay any such action "until the next Conference." When that Conference came, there was no English preacher present, Mr. Asbury being ill; and the question was again postponed for twelve months. When the time for holding the Conference of 1779 approached, it being generally known that the preachers of the south were strongly in favour of the change, while those of the north as generally and as earnestly opposed it, the latter assembled at Judge White's, where Mr. Asbury had taken refuge, and deliberated on the affairs of the Societies so beset with external and internal difficulties. They determined to persevere in abstaining from administering the sacraments: they appear, also, to have transacted the other business pertaining to a Conference. The preachers of the south met in Broken-back Church, Fluvanna county, Virginia; and not only appointed their own preachers, and transacted the business of a Conference, but resolved to ordain ministers to give the sacraments. For this purpose they

Two rival Conferences in America. Progress of the work.

appointed a committee of some of the oldest preachers, who at first ordained each other, and then the other preachers.

Thus during this year the Methodists of America saw the Societies directed by two separate Conferences, each following a different course of action; the northern preachers adhering to Wesley's plans, those of the south acting fully as ordained Christian ministers. Yet, notwithstanding these disturbances and divisions, the work of God prospered. There was an increase of 2,482 members and of 20 preachers.

The conduct of Mr. M'Nab causes serious dissension at Bath.

During this year Wesley had occasion to assert to a painful extent the authority which he possessed, but seldom exercised over the Connexion. He thus relates one case: "Some time since, Mr. Smyth, a clergyman, whose labours God had greatly blessed in the north of Ireland, brought his wife over to Bath, who had been for some time in a declining state of health. I desired him to preach every Sunday evening in our chapel while he remained there. But as soon as I was gone, Mr. M'Nab (the assistant preacher of the Circuit) vehemently opposed that; affirming it was the common cause of all the lay preachers; that they were appointed by the Conference, not by me, and would not suffer the clergy to ride over their heads; Mr. Smyth in particular, of whom he said all manner of evil. Others warmly defended him. Hence the Society was torn in pieces, and thrown into the utmost confusion." On the following day, the account proceeds, "I read to the Society a paper which I wrote near twenty years ago on a like occasion. Herein I observed, that the rules of our preachers were fixed by me, before any Conference existed; particularly the twelfth: 'Above all, you are to preach when and where I appoint:' by obstinately opposin which

rule, Mr. M'Nab has made all this uproar. In the morning, at a meeting of the preachers, I informed Mr. M'Nab that, as he did not agree to our fundamental rule, I could not receive him as one of our preachers till he was of another mind." On the next day he read the same paper at Bristol, as the excitement had also spread thither. A few left the Society at Bath on this account; the rest were thoroughly satisfied. Mr. M'Nab did not leave with the seceders. He must have made his submission to Wesley; for his name is found in the "Minutes" of the succeeding Conference as second preacher at Sheffield; but, while there, he left the Connexion, and began preaching in a separate place.

Its fatal consequences to the progress of religion.

Thus the case ended, as it respected the maintenance of rules and discipline; but the religious results of this insubordination were not so soon removed. Twelve months after these circumstances occurred, Wesley was again at Bath. He then placed on record the important fact, that this conduct of Mr. M'Nab not only checked in the bud a blessed revival of religion, but produced lasting dissension in the Society. Just before this quarrel occurred, there had been such an awakening as had never been known at Bath; but by these dissensions this hopeful movement was neutralized. As Wesley observed, "In spite of all the pains which have been taken, the wound is not healed to this day." Wesley and his brother spent three or four days exerting themselves to the utmost; and, as the result of these labours, he says, "A few were added to the Society." The following week, whilst labouring in Bristol, he wrote, "The people at Bath are still upon my mind; so on Thursday, 27th, I went over again; and God was with us of a truth, whenever we assembled together. Surely

God is healing the breaches of this poor, shattered people." *

The Conference of 1780. Serious misunderstanding between Dr. Coke and Mr. Benson.

On Tuesday, August 1st, 1780, the thirty-seventh Conference began at Bristol. Wesley wrote concerning it, "We have been always hitherto straitened for time. In future let nine or ten days be allowed for each Conference, that everything relative to the carrying on of the work of God may be maturely considered." † On this occasion it was found necessary to appoint another person to preside over the Conference when Wesley was absent; and Mr. Christopher Hopper was selected for this important post.

In the autumn of 1779, a circumstance had occurred which might have produced most disastrous effects on the Methodist preachers and Societies. Dr. Coke, not being satisfied with the terms in which Mr. Benson spoke of the doctrine of the Trinity, wrote him a letter, accusing him of having embraced the Arian heresy. Mr. Benson was sorely pained at this accusation. On the 1st of November, he replied to Dr. Coke's letter. But the terms in which he wrote were not satisfactory. From a long letter on the subject, in Dr. Coke's own handwriting, now before the author, it is evident that he really believed that Mr. Benson was not sound in the faith, and felt great concern on that account. There seems, indeed, reason to conclude that Mr. Benson, in the early part of his ministry, was accustomed to think and speak of the essential Divinity of the Son of God in a "manner partaking more of human refinement than of scriptural simplicity. This, however, was but a temporary perplexity; and he was afterward distinguished

* WESLEY'S "Journal," July 27th, 1780. † *Ibid.*, under the date.

by his peculiarly correct and decided views of every point connected with that awful subject." *

On the first day of this Conference, after some preliminary matters, this subject was introduced. Wesley refused to allow it to be debated in the Conference, but appointed a Committee of preachers to investigate it on the following day. In the afternoon of that day the Committee met, and came to the unanimous opinion that Mr. Benson was no Arian, and that Dr. Coke had no ground for speaking and writing of him as he had done. Dr. Coke seemed sensible of his error, and offered to ask Mr. Benson's pardon before them all. On the morning of August 3rd, the Committee made their report to the Conference, and Mr. Benson and Dr. Coke shook hands, in token of mutual reconciliation. Thus that disagreeable affair which had unhappily occupied many minds, and diverted them from better things, was brought to a happy issue.

Progress of the Connexion.

The number of Circuits was this year increased to 64. The increase of members was 1,344; the numbers being 43,830. Two preachers are reported as having died: "Samuel Wells, a sensible, honest, upright man, who put forth all his strength in every part of his work; he was particularly zealous in observing discipline, and in exhorting believers to go on to perfection: and William Brammah, who, having suffered much from weakness and pain, finished his course with joy." This year the North Wilts was called the Bradford Circuit, and the South Wilts the Salisbury Circuit.

Mr. Benson was at this time appointed to labour as

* "Wesleyan Methodist Magazine" for 1822, p. 74, where those who desire information on this subject may see it treated in a masterly manner. Mr. Benson's mature opinions may be seen in his own language in his "Life," by MACDONALD, p. 106.

Mr. Benson's first Sabbath at Leeds. William Green appointed to Salisbury.

junior preacher in the Leeds Circuit, which he did with great success. In the afternoon of the day on which he entered on his labours in Leeds, he preached in Call Lane chapel, as the Methodist chapel at the time was undergoing important alterations. His subject was the general judgment, on which he spoke with great fulness and power. As he was proceeding with his description, the heavens grew dark, heavy clouds covered the atmosphere, and, just as the preacher was at the climax of his discourse, a tremendous thunder-storm burst forth; which, in connexion with the awful sublimity of the sermon, made an impression on the minds of the hearers which in numerous cases remained very vivid for many years.

The manner in which the Methodist preachers of this day were thrust into the ministry, is finely illustrated by the following instance: William Green was the son of a pious woman in London, and had been educated at Wesley's school at the Foundery, was truly converted to God, had begun to labour as a local preacher, married, and went into business. It appeared, however, to those who knew him, that the great Head of the Church had called him to a wider sphere of usefulness. He was accordingly proposed and accepted by the Conference at Bristol as a preacher, and appointed to the Salisbury Circuit. The feelings under which he entered upon the work are thus expressed by himself: "Many of my prudent friends blamed me much for leaving a quiet, comfortable business. But I had counted the cost. So on Monday, September 11th, I set out for Salisbury. When I left my wife and three children, I felt a mixture of joy and grief, but with a full resignation to the will of God. I have been about five months in my Circuit, and am more than ever convinced that this is the pleasantest life under heaven. Though I

have left my wife, and children, and dearest friends, and house, and business, and wander about, chiefly on foot, through cold and rain, I find my mind uninterruptedly happy. I feel a constant witness of the work wrought in my heart by the Spirit of holiness. I have received in this world a hundredfold. I know that when my 'earthly house of this tabernacle is dissolved,' I have 'a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.'" *.

Methodism extended by means of pious soldiers at Winchester.

The necessity which existed for keeping a military force at Winchester during the American war, for the purpose both of defending the southern coast, and of guarding the French prisoners, of whom there was a depôt there, was rendered the means of extending the Gospel in several directions. Some of these soldiers, as previously mentioned, were pious; others became so by attending the means of grace at Winchester; and, when they removed to other places, introduced Methodist meetings and usages. In this way Methodism was introduced into Brighton and Lewes; prayer-meetings having been held by the soldiers in the barracks before any such meetings were known in the town.

Mr. Fletcher's interest in American Methodism. His eminent spirituality of mind.

The deep interest which Mr. Fletcher took in the progress of the Gospel and the extension of the Methodist Societies, can scarcely be described in terms too strong. Mr. Rankin, who had spent some years in America, was, on his return, after labouring two years in London, stationed in Bristol in 1781, when Mr. Fletcher came back from Switzerland, whither he had gone for the restoration of his health, being, it was thought, far advanced in consumption. The day after Mr. Rankin heard of his arrival at Mr. Ireland's, he went over to see him, and has left the follow-

* "Methodist Magazine," vol. iv., p. 309.

ing account of the interview: "I had such an interview with him as I shall never forget in time nor in eternity. As I had not seen him for upwards of ten years, his looks, his salutation, and his address, struck me with an appearance of wonder, solemnity, and joy. We retired into Mr. Ireland's garden, where we could converse with more freedom. He then began to inquire concerning the work of God in America, and my labours for the five years I had spent on that continent. I gave him, as far as I was capable, a full account of every thing that he wished to know. While I was giving him this relation, he stopped me six times; and, when under the shade of the trees, poured out his soul to God, for the prosperity of the work, and our brethren there. He appeared to be as deeply interested on behalf of our suffering friends, as if they had been his own flock at Madeley. He several times called on me also to commend them to God in prayer. This was an hour never to be forgotten by me, while memory remains. Before we parted, I engaged him to come to Bristol on the Monday following, in order to meet the select band in the forenoon, and to preach in my place in the evening. He did so accordingly. During the hour that he spent with the select band, the room appeared as 'the house of God and the gate of heaven.' He preached in the evening from 2 Thess. ii. 13. The whole congregation was dissolved in tears. He spoke like one who had just left the converse of men and angels, and not like a human being."* In the following November, this eminent Christian minister was united in marriage to Miss Bosanquet, to whom reference has been frequently made, and who, when a wife and a widow, continued to evince the same godly and zealous deportment which had marked her previous history.

* "Life of Fletcher," pp. 267, 277.

The American Conferences. Powers awarded to Mr. Asbury as general superintendent.

The eighth Conference of the American Methodists, or at least the northern section of that body, met at Baltimore, April 24th, 1780. This was a very important juncture in the affairs of the transatlantic Societies; and it was so regarded by the preachers assembled in this Conference. They therefore drew up a series of minutes regulating the duties of assistants, preachers, and trustees. They had previously defined the position and powers of Mr. Asbury as the general superintendent. This definition was not what might have been expected from preachers in a country so extensively imbued with democratic principles as were the United States at that period. The power of Mr. Asbury, in the Conference, was recognised to this extent,—that perfect freedom of speech was to be granted to every preacher; but, after all who wished had spoken on any question, Mr. Asbury was authorized to sum up, and to give his decision as to what was to be done. The American brethren, therefore, clearly intended to place their general superintendent in the same relation to the preachers in that country, as that which Wesley sustained in England. Other minutes, respecting local preachers, slavery, and many other matters, were passed at this time, all of which are elsewhere given at large.* The terms on which they could unite with their brethren of the south were now laid down; and, in accordance with this decision, Mr. Asbury visited the southern Conference on the 8th, 9th, and 10th of May following, in order, if possible, to carry these terms of union into effect. The requirement was, that they should cease administering the sacraments for one year, have a united Conference, and decide upon a common course of action for the future.

Mr. Asbury has left a minute account of this inter-

* See Appendix G, at the end of this volume.

His mission to the Conference of the south.

view.* After fully arguing the case, the preachers of the south took time to consider their answer, which they delivered in the evening, to the effect that they could not submit to the proposed terms of union. Mr. Asbury retired in deep distress of mind, and sought refuge and consolation in earnest prayer. On the following morning he called to take leave of the Conference, when, to his pleasing surprise, he found they had consented to receive the terms they had previously rejected; so that the breach was healed. There was at this Conference a decrease of 73 members and 7 preachers; the numbers being 8,504 members, and 42 preachers.

The state of the work of God in America evidently affected Wesley most painfully. In this year,—and there can be little question but that it was under the influence of the impressions made by the above-recited circumstances,—Wesley applied to Dr. Lowth, Bishop of London, requesting him to ordain a pious young man to serve as a minister in America. This the bishop refused to do; on which Wesley sent him the following letter:—

"*August* 10*th.*

"My Lord,

"Some time since I received your lordship's favour, for which I return your lordship my sincere thanks. Those persons did not apply to the Society,† because they had nothing to ask of them. They wanted no salary for their minister; they were themselves able and willing to maintain him. They therefore applied, by me, to your lordship, as members of the Church of England, and desirous so to continue, begging the favour of your lordship, after your

* See Appendix H, at the end of this volume.

† For the Propagation of Christian Knowledge in Foreign Parts.

lordship had examined him, to ordain a pious man who might officiate as their minister.

"But your lordship observes, 'There are three ministers in that country already!' True, my lord: but what are three, to watch over all the souls in that extensive country? Will your lordship permit me to speak freely? I dare not do otherwise. I am on the verge of the grave, and know not the hour when I shall drop into it. Suppose there were threescore of those missionaries in the country, could I in conscience recommend these souls to their care? Do they take any care of their own souls? If they do, (I speak it with concern,) I fear they are almost the only missionaries in America that do. My lord, I do not speak rashly. I have been in America; and so have several with whom I have lately conversed. And both I and they know what manner of men the far greater part of these are. They are men who have neither the power of religion, nor the form; men that lay no claim to piety, nor even decency.

"Give me leave, my lord, to speak more freely still; perhaps it is the last time I shall trouble your lordship. I know your lordship's abilities and extensive learning: I believe, what is far more, that your lordship fears God. I have heard that your lordship is unfashionably diligent in examining the candidates for holy orders; yea, that your lordship is generally at the pains of examining them yourself. Examining them! In what respects? Why, whether they understand a little Latin and Greek, and can answer a few trite questions in the science of divinity! Alas! how little does this avail! Does your lordship examine whether they serve Christ or Belial? whether they love God or the world? whether they ever had any serious thoughts about heaven or hell? whether they have any real desire to save their own souls, or the souls of others?

And what will become of the souls committed to their care?

"My lord, I do by no means despise learning: I know the value of it too well. But what is this, particularly in a Christian minister, compared to piety? What is it in a man that has no religion? As a jewel in a swine's snout.

"Some time since, I recommended to your lordship a plain man, whom I had known above twenty years as a person of deep, genuine piety, and of unblamable conversation. But he neither understood Greek nor Latin; and he affirmed, in so many words, that he believed it was his duty to preach, whether he was ordained or no. I believe so too. What became of him since, I know not: but I suppose he received Presbyterian ordination; and I cannot blame him, if he did. He might think any ordination better than none.

"I do not know that Mr. Hoskins had any favour to ask of the Society. He asked the favour of your lordship to ordain him, that he might minister to a little flock in America. But your lordship did not see good to ordain him; but your lordship did see good to ordain and send into America other persons who knew something of Greek and Latin; but who knew no more of saving souls, than of catching whales.

"In this respect, also, I mourn for poor America; for the sheep scattered up and down therein. Part of them have no shepherds at all, particularly in the northern colonies; and the case of the rest is little better, for their own shepherds pity them not. They cannot; for they have no pity on themselves. They take no thought or care about their own souls.

"Wishing your lordship every blessing from the great Shepherd and Bishop of souls,

"I remain, my Lord,

"Your Lordship's dutiful Son and Servant."

The visit of Mr. Crook, whilst a local preacher, to the Isle of Man, his usefulness there, and his appointment to the itinerant work, have been already recorded. In June this year Wesley visited that Island, and met the local preachers, twenty-two in number. He was greatly pleased with the state of the Societies, and wondered that so much had been done in five or six years.

The Conference of 1781.

The thirty-eighth Conference was held at Leeds, August 7th, 1781. Respecting it Wesley wrote, "Monday, August 6th, I desired Mr. Fletcher, Dr. Coke, and four more of our brethren, to meet every evening, that we might consult together on any difficulty that occurred. On Tuesday our Conference began, at which were present about seventy preachers, whom I had severally invited to come and assist me with their advice in carrying on the great work of God. Wednesday, 8th, I desired Mr. Fletcher to preach. I do not wonder he should be so popular; not only because he preaches with all his might, but because the power of God attends both his preaching and prayer. On Monday and Tuesday we finished the remaining business of the Conference, and ended it with solemn prayer and thanksgiving."*

Two preachers are reported as having died this year: George Wawne, "a young man zealous for God, and of an unblamable behaviour;" and Robert Wilkinson, "a man of faith and prayer, who, having been a pattern of all good works, died in the full triumph of faith."

John Valton and George Snowden were this year stationed at Manchester. Their ministry was eminently owned of God; there was a general revival of religion throughout the Circuit; and a great ingathering of souls

* Wesley's "Journal," under the date.

was the happy result. The chapel at Stockport was enlarged, and a new one erected at Ashton. But the assistant preacher declared, that "this work would have been more extensive, had it not been for two or three of the leading members of the Rochdale Society, who demanded an unjust share of our labours. Their opposition was so strong that it quite broke my spirit, and cramped my future usefulness. It obstructed all my intended visits to the populous villages." Alas! how often have godly ministers had to make a similar complaint! The spirit of the minister, and the necessity of carrying out his plan, are fully seen in the account which he gives of his visits to the village of Gladwick. The first and second time he went he was permitted to preach in quietness to thirty or forty people. But on the third visit, when he intended to preach in the open air, a storm of persecution was raised; the mob pelted the preacher and people with stones and coal, so that they were compelled to take refuge in the house, where they continued and finished the service. But on leaving to return home, the mob again assailed them; and one poor woman had her head severely cut with a stone.

During the sittings of this Conference, Wesley was able, without difficulty, to parry an attack upon the integrity of Methodism which, however well meant, would have had the effect, if yielded to, of fettering and cramping the free and powerful Christian agencies which had now so long been in operation, and of making Methodism merely and entirely a subordinate appendage to the National Church. This project was brought forward by a surgeon, who was commonly called Dr. Hey, of Leeds, and who had been a member of the Society from his youth. Whilst pursuing his studies, and in the early part of his professional life, he held fast his sincere desire for salvation, and evinced

in all respects a consistent deportment. When, however, he rose to eminence in his profession, the spiritual agencies by which he had been brought to God, and his early piety fostered, were regarded rather as a hinderance than a help; and his bearing plainly indicated the probability of his withdrawing from the Society. He, however, did not think it consistent with his position to do this in the usual quiet way of absenting himself from class, or declining to renew his ticket. Dr. Hey, on the contrary, drew up a long statement of his fears for the Established Church, and founded on these a series of propositions, which, if adopted, would have had the effect of entirely changing the constitution of Methodism. He asked and obtained leave from Wesley to read this statement in the Conference, determined, if his proposals were rejected, to withdraw from the body. On his being introduced, a most extraordinary scene was exhibited:—a member of a particular Society, without one other member to second or countenance him, gravely proposing to the Methodist Conference to consent to the overthrow of their whole discipline, and to act immediately on his speculative suggestions! After hearing enough to learn his design, Wesley quietly observed that "as much business lay before them, brother Hey must defer reading the remainder of his paper to another opportunity." Brother Hey troubled them no more, but withdrew from the Society, saying, "He did not leave the Methodists,—they left him." This gentleman was the brother of John Hey, D.D., Professor of Divinity at Cambridge.

The number of Circuits was this year reduced to 63, Inverness ceasing to be a separate Circuit. The increase of members was 631, the aggregate now reported being 44,461.

There is a singular diversity observable in the "Minutes,"

Singular diversity in the printed Stations, in respect of John and Charles Wesley.

until the last few years of Wesley's life, as to the connexion of his name with that of the preachers. Neither his name nor his brother's, nor any allusion to them, is found in the list of preachers' appointments until 1771. Then the initials J. W., C. W., precede the names of the preachers appointed to the London Circuit. The following year, the J. W. is inserted in the same place, but the C. W. is omitted. In the next year (1773) no initials appear; the only allusion to Wesley being those words immediately at the head of the list, "Thomas Olivers travels with Mr. Wesley." In 1774, Joseph Bradford is appointed to this duty, and his name is repeated in a precisely similar manner in 1775, 1776, and 1777. But, on Dr. Coke's connecting himself with Wesley, a different arrangement obtains; and, in addition to the notification that "Joseph Bradford travels with Mr. Wesley," after the names of the preachers appointed to the London Circuit, are printed in the "Minutes" for 1778 the names of John Wesley, Thomas Coke, John Abraham. In the "Minutes" of the next year (1779) the name of Thomas Coke stands before the names of the London preachers, and it is preceded by J. W. Again, in 1780, the names standing at the head of the list of preachers appointed to London are, John Wesley, Charles Wesley, Thomas Coke; and in 1781, in the same position, are found John Wesley, Charles Wesley, John Fletcher, Thomas Coke. Mr. Fletcher's name did not again appear on the "Minutes," but those of John and Charles Wesley were continued in the same manner to the time of their deaths.

As one man had perfect control over every particular of the whole case, and that man so rigidly precise, so exact and orderly as Wesley, these successive changes could not be the result of inattention, accident, or caprice. There must have

been an adequate cause for each. It is easy to see the reason which at the beginning prevented Wesley from placing his name on the list with his preachers. He and his brother were ordained ministers, having the entire direction of the work; and the preachers were laymen, holding in relation to them a position somewhat similar to that which local preachers now hold to the Wesleyan ministry. There was, therefore, every reason why the order we find in the early "Minutes" should have been adopted. When, however, Wesley was joined by men having a different *status*, a different course was called for; and hence, when Joseph Benson, who had been educated at Oxford, became an itinerant preacher in 1771, Wesley placed his initials and those of his brother at the head of the list. Did Charles Wesley demur to this step? His initials disappeared the following year. Wesley's name, after 1772, only appeared as connected with the announcement that Joseph Bradford was his travelling companion, until the adhesion of Dr. Coke in 1778, when he placed his name in immediate connexion with that of his new clerical ally, but after the names of the London preachers. The following year, Dr. Coke's name stands at the head of the London preachers, preceded by Wesley's initials. Ever afterward, during their life, the names in full of John and Charles Wesley appear at the head of the list of preachers. In 1781 (the Conference now under consideration) there is another striking novelty, in the appearance of John Fletcher's name on the "Minutes." What led to this rather singular and remarkable step?

It may not be possible to give a full and satisfactory explanation of the reasons which led Wesley to place Mr. Fletcher's name on the "Minutes," but the following circumstances will cast light upon the subject. In January,

1773, being at Shoreham, where he doubtless had consulted Mr. Perronet on the subject, Wesley wrote the following letter to Mr. Fletcher :—

"*January*, 1773.

"DEAR SIR,

"WHAT an amazing work has God wrought in these kingdoms, in less than forty years! And it not only continues, but increases, throughout England, Scotland, and Ireland; nay, it has lately spread into New York, Pennsylvania, Virginia, Maryland, and Carolina. But the wise men of the world say, 'When Mr. Wesley drops, then all this is at an end!' And so it surely will, unless, before God calls him hence, one is found to stand in his place. For, *οὐκ ἀγαθὸν πολυκοιρανίη. Εἷς κοίρανος ἔστω.* I see more and more, unless there be one *προεστώς*, the work can never be carried on. The body of the preachers are not united; nor will any part of them submit to the rest; so that either there must be one to preside over all, or the work will indeed come to an end.

"But who is sufficient for these things? qualified to preside both over the preachers and people? He must be a man of faith and love, and one that has a single eye to the advancement of the kingdom of God. He must have a clear understanding; a knowledge of men and things, particularly of the Methodist doctrine and discipline; a ready utterance; diligence and activity, with a tolerable share of health. There must be added to these, favour with the people, with the Methodists in general. For unless God turn their eyes and their hearts towards him, he will be quite incapable of the work. He must likewise have some degree of learning; because there are many adversaries, learned as well as unlearned, whose mouths

must be stopped. But this cannot be done, unless he be able to meet them on their own ground.

"But has God provided one so qualified? Who is he? Thou art the man! God has given you a measure of loving faith; and a single eye to His glory. He has given you some knowledge of men and things; particularly of the old plan of Methodism. You are blessed with some health, activity, and diligence; together with a degree of learning. And to all these He has lately added, by a way none could have foreseen, favour both with the preachers and the whole people. Come out, in the name of God! Come to the help of the Lord against the mighty! Come while I am alive and capable of labour!

> *'Dum superest Lachesi quod torqueat, et pedibus me*
> *Porto meis, nullo dextram subeunte bacillo.'*

Come while I am able, God assisting, to build you up in faith, to ripen your gifts, and to introduce you to the people. *Nil tanti.* What possible employment can you have, which is of so great importance?

"But you will naturally say, 'I am not equal to the task; I have neither grace nor gifts for such an employment.' You say true; it is certain you have not. And who has? But do you not know Him who is able to give them? perhaps not at once, but rather day by day: as each is, so shall your strength be. 'But this implies,' you may say, 'a thousand crosses, such as I feel I am not able to bear.' You are not able to bear them now; and they are not now come. Whenever they do come, will He not send them in due number, weight, and measure? And will they not all be for your profit, that you may be a partaker of His holiness?

"Without conferring, therefore, with flesh and blood,

come and strengthen the hands, comfort the heart, and share the labour, of

"Your affectionate Friend and Brother."

Early in the following month Wesley received from Mr. Fletcher a letter, of which the following is the first part :—

"REVEREND AND DEAR SIR,

"I HOPE the Lord, who has so wonderfully stood by you hitherto, will preserve you to see many of your sheep, and me among them, enter into rest. Should Providence call you first, I shall do my best, by the Lord's assistance, to help your brother to gather up the wreck, and keep together those who are not absolutely bent to throw away the Methodist doctrine and discipline, as soon as he that now letteth is taken out of the way. Every help will then be necessary, and I shall not be backward to throw in my mite. In the mean time, you sometimes need an assistant to serve tables, and occasionally to fill up a gap. Providence visibly appointed me to that office many years ago. And though it no less evidently called me hither, yet I have not been without doubt, especially for some years past, whether it would not be expedient that I should resume my office as your deacon; not with any view of presiding over the Methodists after you, but to ease you a little in your old age, and to be in the way of receiving, perhaps doing, more good. I have sometimes thought how shameful it was that no clergyman should join you, to keep in the Church the work God has enabled you to carry on therein." *

On this communication Wesley wrote the following com-

* BENSON'S "Life of Fletcher," p. 159.

ment: "'Providence,' says he, 'visibly appointed me to that office many years ago.' Is it any wonder, then, that he should now be in doubt whether he did right in confining himself to one spot? The more I reflect upon it, the more I am convinced he had great reason to doubt of this. I can never believe it was the will of God that such a burning and shining light should be 'hid under a bushel.' No; instead of being confined to a country village, it ought to have shone in every corner of our land." *

Probability that Wesley hoped for the active co-operation of Mr. Fletcher.

These were the religious convictions of Fletcher, and the deliberate judgment of Wesley, in 1773. But shortly afterward Mr. Fletcher's health failed, until, in 1776, his case became serious: he had a violent cough, expectorated blood, and was very weak. Wesley then invited him to be his companion in one of his usual evangelical journeys. Mr. Fletcher looked on this as a "call from Providence," and complied. "We set out," says Wesley, "early in the spring, and travelled by moderate journeys, suited to his strength, which gradually increased, eleven or twelve hundred miles. When we returned to London in the latter end of the year, he was considerably better; and I verily believe, if he had travelled with me, partly in the chaise, and partly on horseback, after a few months he would have quite recovered his health. But this those about him would not permit; so, being detained in London by his kind but injudicious friends, while I pursued my journeys, his spitting of blood, with all the other symptoms, returned, and rapidly increased."

In consequence of this returning illness, Mr. Fletcher spent the winter of 1776 at Stoke Newington. He left that place for the benefit of the Hot Wells, near Bristol, April, 1777, and chiefly resided there, spending part of his

* Wesley's "Works," vol. xi., p. 288.

time at Bath and Brislington, until the following December, when he embarked for the Continent, to try the effect of his native air. Mr. Fletcher returned in the summer of 1781, in tolerable health, his consumptive symptoms being all gone. On his return he came through London, and was at Madeley on June 12th, 1781. On the 7th of August the Conference met, and Wesley put Mr. Fletcher's name on the "Minutes," evidently, it seems, in the hope that he would now act on his previous conviction, and give himself to an enlarged sphere of evangelical action. The deep concern under which Wesley laboured at this time, as to the means of maintaining Methodism after his death, would naturally give intensity to this desire. But if he really calculated on having Mr. Fletcher as an active coadjutor in his great work, his hope was soon taken away. That holy man renewed his acquaintance with Miss Bosanquet almost immediately after his return to England; they soon became engaged to each other, were married on November 12th of the same year, and then retired to Madeley, where they resided until Mr. Fletcher's death.

In July, 1782, Dr. Coke was delegated by Wesley to hold a Conference for the Irish preachers in Dublin; but, as the "Minutes" were not printed, we have no more information respecting the state of this part of the Connexion than is contained in the English "Minutes."

The American Conference. Its transactions.

The ninth American Conference was begun at Choptank in the State of Delaware, April 16th, and adjourned to Baltimore to the 24th of the same month. The following reasons were assigned for this rather strange measure: "To examine those who could not go to Baltimore, and to provide supplies for the Circuits where the Lord is more immediately pouring out His Spirit." "With a view to secure greater unanimity of sentiment and action, thirty-

nine out of fifty-four preachers set their names to a paper, expressive of their determination to preach the old Methodist doctrine, and strictly to enforce the discipline as contained in the 'Notes,' 'Sermons,' and 'Minutes,' published by Mr. Wesley," and "to discountenance a separation among either preachers or people."

They also passed a rule respecting local preachers, forbidding their travelling in Circuits without consulting Mr. Asbury, or the assistant near the place where the individual might reside; also one providing that no excluded person should be re-admitted without giving evidence of repentance; and a third, making it the duty of preachers to read often the Rules of the Societies, the "Character of a Methodist," and the "Plain Account of Christian Perfection." Other rules, also made at this time, provided for the settlement of disputes between members of the Society by arbitration, and for the appointment of days of fasting.*

Although the ravages of war had a fearful effect on very many of the Societies, and, under the pressure of this terrible excitement, great numbers "made shipwreck" of "faith and a good conscience," yet the Lord so blessed the word of His grace, that the numbers reported to this Conference gave an increase of 2,035 members, and of 12 preachers.

The Conference of 1782. Six itinerant preachers desist from travelling.

The thirty-ninth English Conference was begun in London, August 6th, 1782. The Circuits were at this Conference increased in number to sixty-six. The members were greatly increased, the numbers now reported being 45,823.

* Dr. Bangs's "History of the Methodist Episcopal Church," vol. i. p. 141.

Six preachers desisted from travelling; four of them, as it is significantly said, "without blame." In the preceding year two others thus desisted, and in 1780 five; one of them only "for want of health." These frequent secessions from the ranks of the ministry must have had a very injurious effect on the work; and unless an adequate cause can be assigned, or it can be shown that these are exceptions to the general rule, they would seem to indicate an unsound state of feeling, or a defective appreciation of the solemn work to which these persons had professed to be called. But a review of this entire period will prove that this is by no means an extraordinary secession. Of *two hundred and eighteen preachers*, whom Mr. Myles, in his "Chronological List," calls the first race of Methodist preachers, no less than *one hundred and thirteen* desisted from travelling. But there is no reason for believing that this proves any general deficiency of zeal, or want of a proper appreciation of the sacred claims of ministerial duty. All the facts show that, throughout this period, the labours and privations to which the preachers were exposed were too much for the endurance of ordinary men. Of the one hundred and five of those preachers who, according to Mr. Myles, continued in the work till death, a majority fell prematurely in the work; as an able writer observes, "human nature being overwhelmed with the toil."

Severity of the preachers' labours and privations, and inadequate provision made for their support.

Nor must it be supposed, that all those who desisted from travelling as Methodist preachers thereby retired from the ministry. Great numbers of them took charge of Dissenting congregations, and some of them, having obtained ordination, went into the Established Church. And the strong inducements which were held out to these men, on account of their ability, energy, and zeal, render it rather a matter of surprise that Wesley should have been

able to retain the co-operation of so many, to labour to the death by the side of their father in the Gospel.

The Birstal chapel case. Further transactions of the Conference.

It is remarkable, considering all the circumstances, that Wesley should have succeeded so generally in settling the chapels in an uniform and secure manner. He, however, at this time met with considerable difficulty respecting one which had been recently built at Birstal, a town of special interest as the birth-place of John Nelson, and the scene of his early labours. The trustees were unwilling to allow the absolute right of appointing preachers to the chapel to be vested in Wesley: they therefore refused to have it settled in the usual way. The question was accordingly proposed in the Conference of 1782, "What can be done with regard to the preaching-house at Birstal? *A.* If the trustees still refuse to settle it on the Methodist plan, 1. Let a plain statement of the case be drawn up; 2. Let a collection be made throughout all England, in order to purchase ground, and to build another preaching-house as near the present as may be."* Thus, as far as it could be done by a resolution, the case was settled.

This Conference further expressed its decided opinion respecting various forms of Sabbath-breaking. It also took into consideration the prevailing neglect of the weekly and quarterly contributions in the classes, and enjoined the most faithful admonition to those persons who, not being in extreme poverty, did not contribute a penny a week, and a shilling a quarter. A practice which had grown up, of preachers giving out hymns of their own composing, was prohibited; and it was again enjoined that efforts should be made to induce the congregations to separate in silence after public worship, and not, as seems to have been too much the practice hitherto, to enter into conversation

* Octavo "Minutes," vol. i., p. 158.

immediately the service was over, even before they left the chapel. Increased diligence and zeal, especially as respected early morning preaching, was anew urged as an imperative duty.

This Conference was closed a day earlier than it would otherwise have been, as Wesley was anxious to proceed on his journey to the west. He accordingly left town as soon as its business was ended, at three o'clock in the afternoon, for Bristol; and, travelling all night, arrived there the following afternoon. The next day he proceeded to Taunton, where he preached, and then passed on to Exeter. Here he found Hugh Saunderson, who had formerly been one of his preachers, making a division in the Society, and opposing his former patron and friend to the utmost of his power. Wesley attended service at the cathedral, and dined with the bishop. He then pursued his usual course through Cornwall, and returned by way of Plymouth to London, every where preaching and superintending the Societies.

During this year Mr. James Rogers travelled in the Macclesfield Circuit, where Mrs. Rogers and their eldest son died. He continued there also the following year, and formed an acquaintance with Miss Hester Ann Roe, who has been previously mentioned as an eminently pious young lady. At the Conference of 1784, Mr. Rogers was appointed to Dublin; and almost immediately afterward was married to Miss Roe, and found in her a Christian helpmeet. Wesley said of her, "Never was any one woman so owned of God in Dublin as she has been already." *

Adam Clarke places himself at the disposal of Wesley.

Immediately after the Conference, (1782,) Adam Clarke, then about twenty years of age, embarked in a trader at Londonderry, for the purpose of coming to England to place himself at the disposal of Wesley. The eminent

* Wesley's "Works," vol. xii., p. 333.

position which he so long and so honourably occupied in the Methodist Connexion, as well as the large space which he filled in the literary and religious world, render it necessary that some particular mention should be made of his previous history.

His previous history and experience.

The man so long known, and who will be remembered to the end of time, as Dr. Adam Clarke, was the son of John Clarke, a native of Scotland, who had been educated for the Church at Edinburgh, Glasgow, and Trinity College, Dublin; where he took the degree of M.A. After various disappointments and vicissitudes, this gentleman settled in the village of Maybeg, in the county of Londonderry, Ireland, and kept an English and classical school. Here Adam Clarke was born and educated; and as his mother was decidedly religious, she early impressed on his youthful mind lessons of sacred truth.

While Adam Clarke was yet a child, the Methodist preachers extended their labours to this remote neighbourhood; and when they were heard by Mrs. Clarke, she declared, "This is the doctrine of the Reformers; this is the true, unadulterated Christianity." She accordingly invited them to her house, where they afterward frequently lodged; so that young Adam grew up under the preaching of the Methodists, and in intimate acquaintance with the preachers. Under these influences he became deeply serious. Prayer was his delight; and to it he had recourse many times a day. He was roused to more than usual earnestness by the inquiries of Mr. Barber, one of the preachers, who one day said to him, "Adam, do you think that God for Christ's sake has forgiven you your sins?" "No, Sir," was the reply; "I have no evidence of this." "Adam, do you pray?" "Yes, Sir." "How often do you pray in private?" "Every morning and evening." "Adam, did

you ever hear of any person finding peace with God, who only prayed in private twice in the day?" Adam felt ashamed and confounded; for, although he knew he was accustomed frequently to lift his heart to God, he was convinced that he was not sufficiently in earnest.

Thus stirred up to increasing diligence, he prayed and studied the Holy Scriptures with great care. At this time his mother took him to a class-meeting. Here, and especially by a remark which the leader made to him after the meeting was closed, he obtained important information respecting the nature and experience of spiritual religion. He became more than ever deeply convinced of sin, and anxious to obtain an interest in divine mercy. Whilst thus seeking the Lord, he passed through various painful exercises, until he approached the intense agony which preceded deliverance. The account of this shall be given in the words of his biographer. "Though often encouraged, he had not yet found that peace and assurance of which he was in pursuit; and it may seem strange, that one who was following God so sincerely, should have been so long without that powerful consolation of religion. Adam was ever ready to vindicate the ways of God in this respect. 'It was necessary,' said he, 'that I should have hard travail; God was preparing me for an important work. I must, emphatically, sell all to get the pearl of great price. If I had lightly come by the consolations of the Gospel, I might have let them go as lightly. It was good that I bore the yoke in my youth. The experience that I learned in my long tribulation, was none of the least of my qualifications as a minister of the Gospel.'

"He was now come to that point, beyond which God did not think proper any longer to delay the manifestation of Himself to the soul of His ardent follower; and, indeed,

such were his concern and distress that, had it been longer deferred, the spirit that God had made would have failed before Him.

"One morning, in great distress of soul, he went out to his work in the fields; he began, but could not proceed, so great was his spiritual anguish. He fell down on his knees on the earth, and prayed, but seemed to be without power or faith. He arose, endeavoured to work, but could not: even his physical strength appeared to have departed from him. He again endeavoured to pray, but the gate of heaven seemed as if barred against him. His faith in the atonement, so far as it concerned himself, was almost entirely gone; he could not believe that Jesus had died for him; the thickest darkness seemed to gather round, and settle on his soul. He fell flat on his face on the earth, and endeavoured to pray, but still there was no answer; he arose, but he was so weak that he could scarcely stand. His agonies were indescribable; he seemed to be for ever separated from God and the glory of His power. Death in any form he could have preferred to his present feelings, if that death could have put an end to them. No fear of hell produced these terrible conflicts. He had not God's approbation; he had not God's image. He felt that without a sense of His favour he could not live. Where to go, what to do, and what to say, he found not: even the words of prayer at last failed; he could neither plead nor wrestle with God.

"O reader, lay these things to heart. Here was a lad that had never been profligate, had been brought up in the fear of God, and who, for a considerable time, had been earnestly seeking His peace, apparently cut off from life and hope! This did not arise from any natural infirmity of his own mind; none who knew him, in any period of his life,

could suspect this: it was a sense of the displeasure of a holy God, from having sinned against Him: and yet his sins were those of a little boy, which most would be disposed to pass by; for he was not of an age to be guilty of flagrant crimes; and yet how sorely did he suffer, in seeking to be born again, to have his conscience purged from dead works, and to have his nature renewed! He was then being prepared for that work to which he was afterwards to be called; the struggle was great, that he himself might not easily turn again to folly, and thus bring condemnation on himself, and a reproach upon God's cause; and it was in all probability necessary that he should experience this deep anguish, that, feeling the bitterness of sin, he might warn others more earnestly; and, knowing the throes and travail of a sinner's soul, he might speak assuredly to the most despairing of the power of Christ's sacrifice, and of the indwelling consolations of the Spirit of God. God appeared to have 'turned aside his ways, and pulled him to pieces; he had bent his bow, and made him a mark for his arrows; he was filled with bitterness, and made drunken as with wormwood; his soul was removed far off from peace, and he forgat prosperity.' Yet even here, though his stroke was heavier than his groaning, he could say, 'It is of the Lord's mercies that I am not consumed.' (Lam. iii. 11–22.) See him in his agony on the bare ground, almost petrified with anguish, and dumb with grief! Reader, hast thou sinned? Hast thou repented? Hast thou peace with thy God, or art thou still in the gall of bitterness and bond of iniquity? These are solemn, yea, awful questions. May God enable thee to answer them to the safety of thy soul!

"But we must return to him whom we have left in agonies indescribable. It is said, 'The time of man's extremity

is the time of God's opportunity.' He now felt strongly in his soul, 'Pray to Christ;' another word for, 'Come to the Holiest through the blood of Jesus.' He looked up confidently to the Saviour of sinners, his agony subsided, his soul became calm. A glow of happiness seemed to thrill through his whole frame; all guilt and condemnation were gone. He examined his conscience, and found it no longer a register of sins against God. He looked to heaven, and all was sunshine; he searched for his distress, but could not find it. He felt indescribably happy, but could not tell the cause; a change had taken place within him, of a nature wholly unknown before, and for which he had no name. He sat down upon the ridge where he had been working, full of ineffable delight. He praised God, and he could not describe for what; for he could give no name to His work. His heart was light, his physical strength returned, and he could bound like a roe. He felt a sudden transition from darkness to light, from guilt and oppressive fear to confidence and peace. He could now draw nigh to God with more confidence than he ever could to his earthly father; he had freedom of access, and he had freedom of speech. He was like a person who had got into a new world, where, although every object was strange, yet each was pleasing; and now he could magnify God for his creation, a thing he never could do before. O, what a change was here! And yet, lest he should be overwhelmed with it, its name and its nature were in a great measure hidden from his eyes. Shortly after, his friend Mr. Barber came to his father's house. When he departed, Adam accompanied him a little on his way. When they came in sight of the field that had witnessed the agonies of his heart, and the breaking of his chains, he told Mr. Barber what had taken place. The man of God took off his hat, and, with

tears flowing down his cheeks, gave thanks unto God. 'O Adam,' said he, 'I rejoice in this; I have been daily in expectation that God would shine upon your soul, and bless you with the adoption of His children.' Adam stared at him, and said within himself, 'O, he thinks surely that I am justified, that God has forgiven me my sins, that I am now His child. O, blessed be God, I believe, I feel I am justified, through the redemption that is in Jesus!' Now, he clearly saw what God had done; and although he had felt the blessing before, and was happy in the possession of it, it was only now that he could call it by its name. Now, he felt and saw that, 'being justified by faith, he had peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom he had received the atonement.'"

Importance of this case.

This account of Dr. Clarke's conversion, given by himself in simple and scriptural terms, is fraught with special importance. Men of learning and literary celebrity have not scrupled to designate all pretensions to this godly experience as the effects of disease. Yet here was a man, to say the least, their equal in learning and talent, their superior in almost all the elements of character which constitute an elevated specimen of humanity, a dignified and useful Christian: and he, in the language of truth and soberness, avows his experience of this "great salvation," and convincingly shows, by the tone and manner of the narrative, that it had given him "the spirit of health and of a sound mind." It may be urged, in opposition to this statement, that however eminent Dr. Clarke afterward became, he was at this time a mere boy, and that these juvenile views and feelings must not be invested with the importance which would be attached to them, if connected with his fully developed maturity of character. There would be weight in this objection, if Dr. Clarke, in after

life, had repudiated the sayings of his youth; if, indeed, when in the full exercise of his great talents, and celebrated as one of the most distinguished men of his day, he had not re-avowed and re-asserted this godly experience of his youth. In proof that he did this, we give the following extract from a sermon which he delivered at Plymouth, when in the zenith of his fame:—

"But might I, without offence, speak a word concerning myself? A great necessity alone would vindicate to my own mind the introduction, in this public way, of any thing relative to myself. But you will bear with my folly, should any of you think it is such. I also have professed to know that God, for Christ's sake, hath forgiven me all my sins; and being thus converted, I am come forth to strengthen my brethren, and preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ. Most of you know that I am no enthusiast, that I have given no evidences of a strong imagination, that I am far from being the subject of sudden hopes or fears, that it requires strong reasons and clear argumentation to convince me of the truth of any proposition not previously known. Now, I do profess to have received, through God's eternal mercy, a clear evidence of my acceptance with God; and it was given me after a sore night of spiritual affliction; and precisely in that way in which the Scriptures, already quoted, promise this blessing. It has also been accompanied with power over sin; and it is now many years since I received it, and I hold it through the same mercy, as explicitly, as clearly, and as satisfactorily as ever. No work of imagination could have ever produced or maintained any feeling like this. I am, therefore, safe in affirming, for all these reasons, that we have neither misunderstood nor misapplied the Scriptures in question."

On March 21st, 1783, Wesley inserted the following in his "Journal:" "At our yearly meeting for the purpose, we examined our yearly accounts, and found the money received (just answering the expense) was upwards of three thousand pounds a year. But that is nothing to me; what I receive of it yearly, is neither more nor less than thirty pounds."

The American Conference.

The tenth American Conference commenced in Ellis's preaching-house, Virginia, April 17th; and by adjournment in Baltimore, May 21st, 1782. This, as in the former case, was done to accommodate the preachers; but as that held at Baltimore was the oldest, nothing that was done in the Virginia Conference was considered binding, unless sanctioned by the northern Conference. The returns of the number of preachers and members showed a satisfactory increase. There were now 59 preachers, being 5 more than the last year; and there were 11,785 members, being an increase of 1,246 upon the numbers of the last year.

The appointment of Mr. Asbury by Mr. Wesley as General Assistant was confirmed at this Conference by a unanimous vote. And their thanks were presented to the Rev. Mr. Jarratt, who had displayed great kindness and zeal in administering the sacraments, and otherwise aiding the preachers and the Societies by his obliging and useful services. The kind offices of this clergyman were the more important, as it was again resolved to abide by the former decision, that the preachers should continue to abstain from administering the Sacraments. Two new Circuits were formed this year: Lancaster, in Pennsylvania, and South Branch, in Virginia.

Wesley holds a Conference in Ireland.

On Tuesday, April 29th, Wesley, having spent two or three weeks in Ireland, opened the little Irish Conference at Dublin, where "all was peace and love." He had in-

tended on this occasion to make his usual tour through Ireland, which he had been prevented from doing for two or three years; but he was taken very ill at Bristol, and only recovered in time to spend a short period in the neighbourhood of Dublin.

The Conference of 1783. Its proceedings.

The fortieth Conference was held at Bristol. It began on Tuesday, July 29th, 1783. Of it Wesley says, "Our Conference began, at which two important points were considered: first, the case of Birstal House; and secondly, the state of Kingswood School. With regard to the former, our brethren earnestly desired that I would go to Birstal myself; believing this would be the most effectual way of bringing the trustees to reason. With regard to the latter, we all agreed that either the school should cease, or the rules of it be particularly observed."

The number of the Circuits was increased to sixty-nine, by the creation of the Burslem, Whitby, and Berwick Circuits. The number of members was 45,995. Six preachers died this year: Richard Boardman, Robert Swindells, James Barry, Thomas Payne, Robert Naylor, and John Livermore, by a fall from his horse.

In the "Minutes" the complaints against Kingswood School are set forth, and means of improvement devised. The evil of needlessly multiplying preaching-houses was recognised; and it was sought to check it, by prohibiting all begging for any chapel out of the Circuit in which it stood.

The American Conference.

The eleventh American Conference assembled at Ellis's preaching-house in Virginia on May 6th, and adjourned to Baltimore on the 27th of the same month. Hostilities had ceased between England and the United States, by the acknowledgment of their independence just at the close of

1782; and for the important results arising from the return of peace, this Conference appointed a day of thanksgiving.

The number of preachers returned was 82, being an increase of 23; and that of members, 13,740, an increase of 1,955. This Conference directed the sum of £260 to be raised for the support of the preachers' wives; and passed rules condemnatory of local preachers holding slaves, and of members making or selling spirituous liquors, or drinking them "*in drams.*"

The state of the Societies.

The peace opened up to the Methodist Societies in the United States the bright dawning of coming prosperity. During the war, great numbers of the people who had no delight in the struggle, retired into the back settlements, where no religious ministry or ordinances had been established. And several of the old Circuits, near the immediate seat of war, were necessarily for a considerable time deprived of their ministers. With the return of peace, provision was soon made for both these parts of the country. The old Circuits were revived, and ministers appointed to the vacant places: at the same time, zealous preachers visited those new settlements which had grown up in the West during the war: so that the work was extended on every side.

Revival at Winchester.

A gracious impulse was given to the work of God about this time in Winchester, principally through the instrumentality of Mr. Brackenbury and Captain Webb.

They arrived at Winchester on the 4th of September. The next evening Mr. Brackenbury preached at the barracks to a large congregation, and on the 6th in the room in the town usually occupied for preaching, when many soldiers attended. After service, Thomas Millar, a grenadier, who had met in Mr. Winscom's class, declared that

he had found the Lord, a declaration fully sustained by his deportment. On Sunday, the 7th, the captain preached in the room morning and afternoon, and in the evening at Corlock, to a very large congregation in the square. Monday, the 8th, at six in the evening he preached in the street, and at seven Mr. Brackenbury conducted service in the room; and on the 9th the captain did the same in the barracks, and the following day in the street. When he had done, Robert Brison, a soldier, who met in Mr. Thomas's class, testified that the Lord had spoken peace to his soul. When the captain heard this account, he requested the friends to unite in prayer, being then at Mr. Jasper Winscom's. While they were thus engaged, his daughter, a girl about thirteen years old, was seized with powerful convictions of sin: for her the persons assembled continued in supplication, and in about half an hour it pleased the Lord to speak peace to her soul. On Thursday, the 11th, the captain preached at the barracks, and under his last prayer Mary Edridge Hayter was deeply convinced of sin, and cried aloud for mercy. She, with several others under strong conviction, followed the captain to Mr. Winscom's house, when God was earnestly besought on their behalf; and in a short time E. Hayter broke out in a rapture, exclaiming, "Christ is mine! He is mine!" At the same time, two others were enabled to rejoice in God their Saviour: one belonged to Mr. Thompson's class, and the other had previously been made acquainted with the pardoning love of God, but had lost her peace, and for a time became inclined to mysticism. On the 12th, the captain again preached in the room, where several more attended who were seeking salvation: they prayed, until another soldier, who had been some time in the Society, found peace.

As Mr. Webb was returning home, after service at the barracks on Thursday evening, he overtook a very trifling, gay young woman, whose name was Sarah Day, in company with an elderly lady: they were Church people, and, as was too frequently the case in that day, rigid Pharisees. Both appeared much displeased with the captain's preaching, who, hearing their objections, spoke to them very abruptly, telling them, if they did not experience in their hearts what he had been speaking about, they would certainly be lost for ever. The young woman replied, for her part "she was sure of going to heaven if she died that night." The captain answered, "If you die in your present condition, you will certainly be lost;" and, after exchanging a few more words to the same effect, he left them. On the Saturday following, the elderly woman, Mrs. Butts, inquired where the captain could be seen; and being informed where he intended to dine, they both came to him after dinner, and conversed with him some time; he then prayed with them, and left them both under deep convictions. On Sunday evening Mrs. Butts attended service, and the following morning Sarah Day had some further conversation with Mr. Webb before he left Winchester. In his last prayer on Saturday night, Sally King, a young woman who had been under convictions some months, found peace. On Monday evening Mr. Winscom preached at the room, when Mrs. Butts and Sarah Day were present, apparently in great distress. After worship on the following Wednesday, they met at the house of Mr. Bannister, when one of the Society asked Mrs. Butts if she was earnestly seeking salvation, and said something of the misery of the torments of hell. Sarah Day, at the mention of that word, broke out, saying, "Hell! here is hell! I have hell in my heart; and there is the devil. Do you not see

him?" She then flew about the room, raving like a maniac. After some time, she screamed aloud, calling on Mr. Winscom to come and save her from the hands of Satan; for she imagined she saw him stand before her, ready to carry her away to eternal misery. A messenger was dispatched for Mr. Winscom. In the mean time Mrs. Butts was in great distress, though not so deep as Sarah Day. Some of the friends present then prayed; but they had not been engaged long, before Sarah Day broke out, with rage and despair pictured in her countenance, when they pleaded the promises of God, and the merits of Christ. "Christ!" said she, "you know He never died for me; He never promised to save so great a sinner as me;" with many kindred expressions. When Mr. Winscom arrived, he gave out the verse,—

"O that my load of sin were gone!"

and afterwards cried to the Lord on her behalf; and in a few minutes the Lord spoke peace to her soul. They then wrestled on behalf of Mrs. Butts, but, finding no answer, they were constrained to leave her. The next morning about two o'clock, the Lord graciously visited her soul, impressing deeply upon her mind these words: "Work out thy salvation with fear and trembling." She knew not where to find the words; but, visiting one of the Society early the following morning, she was directed to the part of Scripture where they might be found. Both of them immediately joined the Society.

The following Sunday two others found peace; one, an elderly woman, awakened under the preaching of Captain Webb two years before. On Wednesday the 24th, at a prayer-meeting, a young woman belonging to the Society at Houghton was cut to the heart, and soon after set at

liberty. The following day, William Harris, a soldier, who was convinced of his sinfulness eight weeks before, came to Mr. Winscom in great distress, on account of a rash oath which he had taken two years and a half ago, and which he broke soon after. He appeared exceedingly terrified: he went to the class, where he was favoured with some gleams of hope, and soon afterward rejoiced in a pardoning God. In a little while others tasted the good word of life, among whom was a soldier, who was brought into liberty while on guard.

On Monday, October 20th, a love-feast was held for the soldiers, and many found it indeed a feast of love. Thomas Millar testified that the blood of Jesus Christ had then cleansed him from all sin: so strong were his feelings, that he was unable to stand, and was obliged to be supported by those near him. Several who had been brought into liberty were constrained to cry out, "Lord, withhold Thy hand, or enlarge our hearts." At the same time, a child six or seven years of age declared herself happy in the love of God. Such was the gracious manifestation of the Spirit of God to the Methodist Society in Winchester.* The affectation of learning and philosophy may stigmatize such a work as madness, while the Pharisaic and the formalist will call it "rant and enthusiasm." The Christian, however, who recognises the obvious meaning of the New Testament and the work of the Holy Ghost on the human mind, will joyfully admit that the cases above described exhibit the enlightening and saving influence of the Holy Spirit as "the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth."

During this year Wesley was joined by an Irish clergyman, the Rev. James Creighton, A.B. He was born at

* MS. "History of Methodism in Hampshire."

Rev. James Creighton becomes associated with Wesley.

Moyn Hall, near Cavan, in Ireland, in the year 1739. Religiously instructed by a pious mother, he feared God from his youth. Marked success attended his studies at school, and he was subsequently sent to Trinity College, Dublin; where, in 1764, he was admitted to the degree of Bachelor of Arts. In October, 1765, he was ordained priest, and appointed curate in the cathedral church, under the Bishop of Kilmore; whose first counsel to his curate—to "say nothing at all about *faith* in his sermons"—was by no means calculated to advance his holiness, or promote his success. At this time, Mr. Creighton, though outwardly correct in his behaviour, was a stranger to the nature and power of true godliness. Becoming, however, acquainted with some of the writings of Wesley and Fletcher, he was gradually led to see the necessity of being born again.

After several months of earnest prayer to Almighty God, he was enabled to believe to the saving of his soul, and showed the reality of the change by a holy life. Mr. Creighton immediately commenced a new Christian course, which, though censured by some of his friends as utterly "irregular," soon evinced, by more earnest and faithful appeals from the pulpit, and open-air preaching, the character and force of the change that had taken place in him. Without any separation from his own Church, he frequently associated with the Methodists in the surrounding neighbourhood, and assisted at their different Society meetings. In the year 1783, he was invited by John Wesley to join him in London, whither he shortly afterwards went, and was appointed to officiate as one of the resident clergymen at the City Road chapel. Mr. Creighton's godly deportment was unimpeachable; and he has the reputation of a scholar whose knowledge of the classics and oriental literature was respectable.*

* Rev. Samuel Romilly Hall.

Proposal for sending missionaries to the East considered.

On the 14th of February, 1784, Wesley and the London preachers considered a proposal for sending missionaries to the East Indies; and he records the conclusion to which they came: "After the matter had been fully considered, we were unanimous in our judgment,—that we have no call thither yet, no invitation, no providential opening of any kind."

The Deed of Declaration.

Wesley's next measure was one of the most vital consequence to the interests and perpetuity of Methodism,—the enrolment in the High Court of Chancery of a Deed defining and giving legal existence to the Methodist Conference, usually known in Methodism as the "Deed of Declaration."

The occasion and history of this Deed.

The preceding pages contain abundant evidence that when Wesley entered on his itinerant labours, and, indeed, through a long career of devoted diligence and success, he had no defined plan for the organization of the Societies everywhere rising up around him; but simply followed the openings of Providence, as they were presented to his view. Hence, when he built the first preaching-house at Bristol, in 1739, it was proposed, and he consented, to have the deed of trust "drawn up in the Presbyterian form." Mr. Whitefield, hearing of this, wrote to Wesley, very earnestly dissuading him from this course, and asking, "Do you consider what you do? If the trustees are to name the preachers, they may exclude even you from preaching in the house you have built! Pray let this deed be immediately cancelled." To this the trustees readily agreed, and it was done; and the power of appointing preachers to the house was thus secured to him who had provided most of the cost, and who was responsible for the debt.*

As Wesley approached old age, both he and the preachers generally felt deep concern for the arrangement

* Wesley's "Works," vol. xiii., p. 260.

of some plan or course of action which might be ready to come into operation on Wesley's death, and be calculated to maintain union amongst the preachers and people, and carry on the great work of religion in the nation. For the purpose of securing this object, he read a paper to the Conference of 1769, which contained the pledges previously referred to, as having been signed by all the preachers at three several Conferences. This paper also contained the following proposed arrangement :—

"On notice of my death, let all the preachers in England and Ireland repair to London within six weeks :

"Let them seek God by solemn fasting and prayer :

"Let them draw up articles of agreement, to be signed by those who choose to act in concert :

"Let those be dismissed who do not choose it, in the most friendly manner possible :

"Let them choose, by votes, a *Committee* of three, five, or seven ; each of whom is to be *moderator* in his turn :

"Let the Committee do what I do now : propose preachers to be tried, admitted, excluded ; fix the place of each preacher for the ensuing year, and the time of the next Conference."

It was said, by one of the preachers of that day, that this proposal was universally approved, and regarded as affording a means of union and permanence to the preachers and the Societies. "This plan of settlement met so general and hearty an approbation, both among the preachers and people, that it was generally understood that it would make our union, under God, perpetual."*

As the Methodist Societies became more extended, circumstances arose which led Wesley to entertain doubts of

* Hampson's "Appeal."

the wisdom and efficiency of this plan. From the beginning he was the centre and seat of all power and authority; and although, as time advanced, he gradually, and almost imperceptibly, devolved nearly the whole administrative government of the Societies on the Conference and the Assistants, still all matters of peculiar difficulty were carried to him, and from his judgment there was no appeal. The question had now to be settled, who or what body was to exercise this supreme authority after his death.

In order to see the real character and bearing of this question, it will be necessary to refer to some usages which had arisen in Methodism, and the legal difficulties which they produced. Although Wesley invariably retained the legal power to appoint every preacher to labour wherever he thought most for the interest of the common cause, he exercised this power with such judgment, and in such friendly union with the Conference, that preachers of considerable standing did not know but that the entire authority to make the appointment was fully vested in that body.*

If, then, it is asked, "What is to be understood by 'the Conference?'" we find that Wesley has supplied a clear and complete answer to the question, by stating in detail the origin and office of this body.

"In June, 1744, I desired my brother and a few other clergymen to meet me in London, to consider how we should proceed to save our own souls, and those that heard us. After some time, I invited the lay preachers that were in the house to meet with us. We conferred together for several days, and were much comforted and strengthened thereby.

* WESLEY'S "Works," vol. iv., p. 162; and vol. xiii., p. 10.

"The next year I not only invited most of the travelling preachers, but several others, to confer with me in Bristol. And from that time, for some years, though I invited only a part of the travelling preachers, yet I permitted any that desired it to be present, not apprehending any ill consequences therefrom.

"But two ill consequences soon appeared: one, that the expense was too great to be borne; the other, that many of our people were scattered while they were left without a shepherd. I therefore determined, 1. That, for the time to come, none should be present but those whom I invited; and, 2. That I would only invite a select number out of every Circuit.

"This I did for many years; and all that time the term *Conference* meant not so much the *conversation* we had together, as the persons that conferred; namely, those whom I invited to confer with me from time to time. So that all this time it depended on me alone, not only what persons should constitute the Conference, but whether there should be any Conference at all: this lay wholly in my own breast; neither the preachers nor the people having any part or lot in the matter."*

If some legal steps were not taken to invest the Conference with the power of appointing preachers to the Methodist pulpits throughout the country, on the death of Wesley, that power would pass into the hands of the several bodies of trustees, in regard to their respective chapels. A minister who had every opportunity, by personal friendship with Wesley, of knowing his views, and forming a correct judgment of the whole subject, assures us, that the founder of Methodism deprecated such an alternative, and that the preachers and people generally

* Wesley's "Works," vol. xiii., p. 235.

shared his feelings. He has placed the whole case before us thus:—

"That there could be but little hope, that the work should continue to be a work of God, where such a power should be assumed, was very clear to all who were the subjects of that work. Upon Mr. Wesley's mind it lay with great weight. That men, not a few of whom had departed from the Society, (and some had been expelled from it,) should, merely by virtue of their legal authority over the premises, appoint preachers to feed and guide the flock, exhibited a distressing prospect. Even where the trustees continued members of the Society, and attached to its interests, what could be expected, in a matter of such vital concern, from men so much engaged in worldly business? This has often been proved in religious communities. It was the chief cause of the decline of religion among the latter Puritans: their lay elders assumed, after some time, the whole authority. From this proceeded that worldly spirit and political zeal which so greatly dishonoured that work in its last days, and which had previously overthrown both Church and State. We see also, in our day, in the sufferings of the excellent Scott, as detailed in his Memoirs lately published, what both ministers and people have to expect from such a system of lay government.

"The evil showed itself in prominent overt acts, previous to this period. Mr. Wesley, having striven to prevail on some trustees, in Yorkshire, to settle their chapels, so that the people might continue to hear the same truths and be under the same discipline as heretofore, was assailed with calumny, and with the most determined opposition, as though he intended to make the chapels his own! Another set of trustees, in the same county, absolutely refused to settle a lately erected chapel; and, in

the issue, engaged Mr. Wesley's book-steward in London, who had been an itinerant preacher, to come to them as their minister. This man, however, was '*wise in his generation*;' and insisted upon having an income of sixty pounds *per annum*, with the chapel-house to live in, settled upon him during his life, before he would relinquish his place under Mr. Wesley. What will not party spirit do! I was a witness, when, after Mr. Wesley's death, it was found that the preachers continued united and faithful in their calling, how deeply those men repented of their conduct in this instance. In vain they represented to the man of their unhappy choice, how lamentably their congregations had declined, and how hardly they could sustain the expenses they had incurred. The answer was short: they might employ other preachers, if they should think it proper; but the dwelling-house and the stated income belonged to him!

"We need not wonder, that Dr. Whitehead should speak with such deep concern, and indulge such a spirit of calumny, concerning this important measure of settling the chapels. The Doctor, and many others who had departed from the work, had, through that wise measure, but little prospect of succeeding, like his friend the book-steward, to occupy chapels, built for the people by Mr. Wesley's influence and the labour of the preachers. The favour of those trustees who might be disposed to forget their sacred obligations, and incur such an awful responsibility, held out but little hope to such men, now that a legal definition was given to the phrase,—THE CONFERENCE: and, in fact, every appeal made to Equity has fully succeeded, on this very ground.

"In that day of uncertainty and surmise, there were not wanting some, even among the itinerant preachers, who

entertained fears respecting a settlement of this kind. They had but little hope that the work would continue, after Mr. Wesley's death, as it had during his life; and they thought it probable, that the largest Societies and, of course, the principal chapels would become independent. In such a case, the favour of the chief men, and especially of the trustees, would insure considerable advantages to those itinerants who might wish to become settled ministers. Of all this Mr. Wesley was fully aware, and he determined to counteract such wisdom. He found it, however, very difficult to do so, without breaking with them, which love forbade; or assuming, in a questionable case, an authority contrary to that of a father in Christ. One of those preachers, and of considerable eminence, attacked the Deed of Settlement, and declared, that Mr. Wesley might as justly place all the dwelling-houses, barns, workshops, &c., in which we had preached for so many years, under the authority of the Conference, as he had done the chapels; and that he thus assumed an authority that the Lord had not given him. This seemed far too strong to be generally received, and it was quickly answered. A preacher, in reply, observed, that, 'certainly, there was as much justice in the one case as the other, provided those dwelling-houses, barns, workshops, &c., had been built in consequence of the preaching, and by the subscriptions of the Connexion; and in order that those erections might continue to be used for the purposes for which they were thus built!' This closed the debate for that time; but the preacher first mentioned, soon after he got to his Circuit, rallied again, and wrote Mr. Wesley a long and earnest expostulation on the same subject, which I read to him in course. To this Mr. Wesley thus shortly replied:—

"'My dear Brother,—I do not love to dispute; and, least of all, to dispute with *you*, who will dispute through a stone wall. It seems a little thing with you, who shall appoint the preachers; with me it is, under God, every thing, both for the prosperity and the continuance of the work.' He concluded with some fatherly advice, not to be so very sure of his own opinion, or so wise in his own conceit.

"The first charge which Dr. Whitehead brings against this important transaction is, that 'neither the design of the Deed, nor the words of the several clauses, are to be imputed to Mr. Wesley.' I answer, The Doctor here asserts that of which he had no knowledge. He had, several years before, departed from the work, and from all fellowship with the preachers or people. When he again joined the Methodist Society in London, he heard the surmisings and complaints of some who had taken offence at this measure, and this he detailed at a convenient period. Some of the itinerant preachers brought the same charge, at the first Conference after the Deed was enrolled, and declared, that it was the work of Dr. Coke, who had joined Mr. Wesley a few years before. Mr. Wesley only replied to this in the words of Virgil, *Non vult, non potuit!* 'He had neither the will nor the power.'

"The truth is: the Conference had requested Mr. Wesley to get such an instrument drawn up, as would define or explain what was meant by that expression, used in the various deeds of the chapels so settled; viz., 'The Conference of the People called Methodists;' upon the meaning of which terms the authority so appointing must rest, so long as there should be an itinerant ministry. The elder Mr. Hampson, mentioned in the preface to this work, was particularly earnest with Mr. Wesley, to have such an

instrument executed without delay. He immediately set about it; and having given directions to his solicitor, who took the opinion of counsel upon the most proper and effectual way of doing it, he committed it chiefly to the care of Dr. Coke, as his own avocations would not admit of a constant personal attendance. He, however, wrote, with his own hand, a list of a hundred names, which he ordered to be inserted, declaring his full determination that no more should be appointed; and as there never had been so great a number at any Conference, and generally from twenty to thirty less, the number so fixed would not, it was thought, have excited either surprise or displeasure.

"Some of those preachers, however, whose names were omitted, were deeply offended, as I have stated in the preface to the first volume. But I can state with the fullest certainty, that what Dr. Whitehead has asserted, respecting Mr. Wesley having repented of this transaction, is totally unfounded. On the contrary, he reviewed it always with high satisfaction; and praised God, who had brought him through a business which he had long contemplated with earnest desire, and yet with many fears. The issue, even to this day, proves the wisdom of the measure; and that it was in the order of HIM, without whom 'nothing is strong, nothing is holy.' Many chapels have been restored to the Societies, to whom they, in justice, belonged, by the upright decisions of our Courts of Equity, so that now no fears are entertained of any chapels settled according to this Deed.

"Dr. Whitehead's second objection is a poor cavil. He strives, in the strongest language, to fix the charge of *falsehood* on those who drew up this DEED, and on Mr. Wesley, who signed and sanctioned it, because of the term 'THE CONFERENCE OF THE PEOPLE CALLED METHODISTS.'

I cannot but fear, that this charge might be retorted against the Doctor with truth; for he well knew, when he wrote thus, that the term was inserted in this explanatory and authoritative instrument, because it was not only the term used in common speech for many years, but also because it was used in every record, and in all the deeds of chapels which were settled in this way. It was, therefore, absolutely necessary, that, in such an explanatory Deed, the same term should be used, as in the deeds of the particular chapels to which it referred. Had not the Doctor, therefore, an intention to deceive, when he cried out, 'It is well known, that *the people called Methodists* never held a Conference since *Methodism* existed?' Certainly not; nor will they ever come together till they '*all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ.*' But there was no deception in thus using the term. Every member of the Connexion knew, that it meant the assembled *preachers* of the people called Methodists. The Doctor brings in the *people*, as he does the *Church*, when it suits his purpose. His observations on this point are only suited to the theories of our wildest demagogues. This absolutely necessary work was done *for the people*, who could in no other way retain their property, and have an itinerant ministry. They now enjoy these blessings, and are thankful to God and man." *

The Conference—that is, those Methodist preachers who were from year to year invited by Wesley to meet him for consultation on the various affairs respecting the Methodist Societies—had been thus in operation for about twenty years; and whatever doubt or uncertainty might still remain as to the mode by which the desired end was to be accomplished, it had become a clearly understood con-

* Moore's "Life of Wesley," vol. ii., pp. 295–300.

clusion, that "the Conference" would, at Wesley's death, succeed to the possession of the power which he exercised, and proceed to administer it.

This power consisted of two prominent elements. First, it was an authority to appoint every minister to his sphere of duty, year by year, so that every preacher must labour in the Circuit to which he was thus appointed, or leave the Connexion. And, secondly, this power extended to all the chapels of the Connexion, so that the trustees everywhere were bound to receive the preachers so appointed, and no others, to officiate regularly in the several pulpits.

Wesley assures us, that, some years before the Deed of Declaration was executed, it was the general wish of preachers and people that these powers should after his death be exercised by the Conference. He distinctly states, that the preachers, so far as they were concerned, had "agreed" to this;* and that nine-tenths of the people desired it.†

Thus far all was clear, and characterized by cheering unanimity. But then it was foreseen that at the death of Wesley the question would arise, as one of law, "What does the term legally mean? Who are the Conference?" This presented a difficulty, and the preachers in the year 1783 desired Wesley to determine the legal meaning of the word. "Hitherto," he says, "it had meant, (not the whole body of travelling preachers; it never bore that meaning at all; but,) those preachers whom I invited yearly to confer with me." In order to have the best information on the subject, he consulted "a skilful and honest attorney; and he consulted an eminent counsellor, who answered, 'There is no way of doing this but by naming a determinate number of persons. The deed which names these, must

* Wesley's "Works," vol. xiii., p. 235. † *Ibid.*, vol. xii., p. 139.

be enrolled in Chancery; then it will stand good in law.'"*

This plan, it must be admitted, would give to the Conference an altered constitution; but an alteration was inevitable after the death of Wesley; for no one imagined that any other person could be invested with the power of making a selection of certain preachers year by year to form a Conference, even if no legal difficulty opposed the operation of such a plan. But the mode now advised by counsel certainly required the men to be named at once, and also that the appointment should remain valid during their continuance as itinerant preachers. This mode was equally unsuited to the plan previously suggested and approved in the Conference; namely, for the preachers to assemble within six weeks after the death of Wesley, and to elect a committee of three, five, or seven preachers, to succeed to his power.

The conditions now imported into the case by the lawyers prevented the possibility of deferring the appointment of a *legal Conference* until the death of Wesley, and rendered an immediate solution of the question imperative. In considering this case, Wesley says, "My first thought was to name a very few, suppose ten or twelve persons. Count Zinzendorf named only six who were to preside over the community after his decease. But, on second thoughts, I believed there would be more safety in a greater number of counsellors, and therefore decided on having one hundred." He accordingly named one hundred of the preachers, out of one hundred and ninety-one, the number then employed as preachers, and inserted their names in a Deed, which was drawn as advised, and enrolled in Chancery. Thus the Conference was legally defined, and its

The Deed drawn and enrolled in Chancery.

* Wesley's "Works," vol. xiii., p. 236.

power to appoint the preachers to their Circuits, and to occupy the chapels, was permanently secured to the Connexion. The object, therefore, which had occasioned so much anxiety, and on which so much depended, was effectually attained. This deed was executed, February 28th, 1784. It will be found in the Appendix, accompanied by the draft of a deed for settling chapel trusts in accordance with its provisions.*

Calls forth violent opposition and agitation.

It is not necessary to detail the various opinions which this decisive act of the founder of Methodism called forth. But it must be observed, that it occasioned violent opposition, and led to perhaps the first attempt ever made to agitate the whole of the Methodist Societies against their legitimate government. No sooner was it publicly known that this Deed of Declaration was executed, than John Hampson, senior, sent forth a printed circular, entitled, "An Appeal to the Reverend John and Charles Wesley; to all the Preachers who act in Connexion with them, and to every Member of their respective Societies in England, Scotland, Ireland, and America." In this document the curious may find almost all the allegations which have been put forth in every agitation of Methodism from that time to the present. Here is an alleged great breach of faith, an asserted act of injustice and tyranny, said to have been committed under the influence of a favoured few; and the complainants are represented as persecuted and injured.

Reasons for the course adopted by Wesley.

In a case of so much importance, it is not unreasonable to inquire what other course could have been taken. It being settled as a legal dogma, that the persons composing the Conference should be named during the lifetime of Wesley, the first question which presents itself is, Shall a part or the whole of the preachers constitute the Con-

* See Appendices I and K, at the end of this volume.

ference? Wesley declares that he gave this point close attention, and was prevented naming the whole one hundred and ninety-one, because the meeting of so many would be unreasonably expensive, and the Circuits during the sitting of Conference would be left without preachers; reasons which must be conclusive with all reasonable men. But then, admitting that a part of the preachers only ought to have been selected, should Wesley have done this himself, or have left the Conference to do it? The latter course would certainly have warded off the objection that a few favourites had taken advantage of his years, and that the selection was in fact theirs; but then it is equally clear, from the temper afterward displayed by some of the preachers, that such a course would have produced much discord and confusion. There is, however, a fatal objection to this plausible plan. The boon, privilege, or power, to be given, and the responsibility to be exercised, did not of right belong to the Conference, but to Wesley. He was bound in conscience before God, to place this power in the most suitable hands. He accordingly refutes the slander of his having been led by a few persons in his selection, with the assertion, "In naming these preachers I HAD NO ADVISER." And he thus modestly defends the manner of his choice: "I had no respect of persons; but I simply set down those that, according to the best of my judgment, were most proper. But I am not infallible. I might mistake, and think better of some of them than they deserved. However, I did my best; and if I did wrong, it was not the error of my will, but of my judgment."

His course the best that could have been taken.

Those who pronounce an opinion on this case should also consider what motive Wesley had to do wrong in his selection. It could not affect him: it was to come into operation after his death. The persons chosen were ap-

pointed conservators under God of the results of the labours of his life. What motive could affect him in such a choice so strongly as a desire to have the best men? Besides, had he selected six, eight, or ten, he might have been charged with favouritism; but, in taking one hundred out of one hundred and ninety-one, such a feeling could scarcely have a place, especially as the remaining ninety-one were eligible to fill up vacancies which must in the course of things be soon created by deaths and retirements. It seems, therefore, on a careful review of all the circumstances, that, in this vitally important case, Wesley was providentially led to adopt the wisest and safest course, and thus to insure the well-working and permanence of the Societies which he had been the honoured instrument of raising.

Reasons why this Deed has been condemned.

But it may be asked, especially by persons who are only partially acquainted with Methodism, "If this plan was so equitable, and has been found to work so well, why was it so violently opposed by various persons at the time? and why is it declaimed against by different, and even conflicting, parties at the present day?" These queries admit of easy and explicit answers, which are perhaps necessary to afford a full knowledge of the case.

The Deed of Declaration was violently opposed in Wesley's time by those preachers whose names were not inserted, and who yet regarded themselves as equal, in respect of standing and ability, to any of their brethren. The mention of this class is a sufficient explanation of their objection. Messrs. Hampsons, Eels, and others, greatly distinguished themselves by complaints of this kind.

Besides these, there were others who had become united to Methodist Societies, but who never calculated on the permanence of the body, or its continued and energetic

action as a whole, after the death of Wesley. Some of these, unfaithful to their principles and calling, looked forward to the death of their founder as a time when, by the favour of friendly trustees, they might secure the pulpits of respectable chapels, and escape from the toil, privations, and dangers of itinerancy.

There were, also, men who believed that Methodism was, in its origin, a very good and useful means of rousing a slumbering Church and nation to a sense of God and religion; but that, having brought out the sterling doctrines of the Reformation from neglect and obscurity, and imbued the clergy and the people to some extent with a conviction of their spiritual vitality and practical importance, as well as having afforded, in thousands of instances, proofs of the experimental and practical godliness which they could impart in life and in death, it ought to have retired from the scene, and never to have formed a permanent body, but to have left these lessons of holy faith and practice for the edification of the Church whence the founder of Methodism had been raised. Had this been done, Wesley would have been lauded as an apostle by Dr. Southey and many others, who have spoken of him in a very different tone.

The Deed of Declaration alone prevented such a dislocation of the Societies on the death of Wesley. But for it, the trustees almost everywhere would have succeeded to the power of appointing preachers to the several chapels. As long, therefore, as the appointments of Conference were agreeable, they would be respected; but as soon as they were objected to, they would be repudiated. The real and permanent union of the several trustees throughout the country could never be contemplated as probable: therefore the reasonable conclusion is, that, had not the Deed of

Declaration been executed, the Methodist Societies would soon after the death of Wesley have inevitably fallen into the condition of unconnected, if not of rival, religious communities.

For this reason, those persons who deplore the continued existence of Methodism as a great and lamentable ecclesiastical irregularity; who believe, that on the demise of Wesley, if not before, the Societies which he had gathered should have fallen back into the bosom of the National Church; naturally look on the Deed of Declaration as the master evil of the whole system. Nor do those persons look on it with more favour who regard religious communities as approaching perfection, just in proportion as the minister is brought under the control of the laity, and the pastoral office is virtually exercised, not by the shepherd, but by a favoured few of the flock. All those who, with such views, look to Methodism for the promotion of their objects, see in this Deed the defeat of all their hopes. This culminating measure of Wesley's judgment, whilst it left his preachers still dependent on the voluntary contributions of the people for support, enabled him at the same time to bequeath to them the possession of those powers which are necessary to the due and efficient discharge of the functions of their office as ministers of Christ.

Dr. Coke presided over the Irish Conference, but we have no record of its transactions.

General spiritual prosperity in the Societies.

In his journeys during the spring of 1784, Wesley speaks of a very extensive revival of the work of God in country places around Newcastle-under-Lyne. He says, "Indeed, this country is all on fire, and the flame is still spreading from village to village."

The spirit and conduct of Wesley, as exhibited in his

vigilant oversight and persevering labours, are truly apostolic. Hear him, at the age of eighty-one, after lamenting the discontinuance of the five o'clock morning preaching at Chester, exclaim, "We are labouring to secure the preaching-houses to the next generation! In the name of God, let us, if possible, secure the present generation from drawing back to perdition! Let all the preachers that are still alive to God join together as one man, fast and pray, lift up their voice as a trumpet, be instant in season, out of season, to convince them they are fallen; and exhort them instantly to 'repent, and do the first works:' this in particular,—rising in the morning, without which neither their souls nor bodies can long remain in health."

CHAPTER V.

FROM THE CONFERENCE OF 1784 TO THE DEATH OF WESLEY.

The Conference of 1784. Debate on the Deed of Declaration.

THE forty-first Methodist Conference began at Leeds, July 27th, 1784. Of it Wesley wrote in his "Journal," "Our Conference began; at which four of our brethren, after long debate, (in which Mr. Fletcher took much pains,) acknowledged their fault, and all that was past was forgotten. Thursday, 29th, being the public thanksgiving day, as there was not room for us in the old church, I read prayers, as well as preached, at our room. I admired the whole service for the day. The prayers, Scriptures, and every part of it pointed to one thing,—'Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another.' Having five clergymen to assist me, we administered the Lord's Supper, as we supposed, to sixteen or seventeen hundred persons. Sunday, we were fifteen clergymen at the old church. Tuesday, our Conference concluded in much love, to the disappointment of all." *

The "long debate in which Mr. Fletcher took much pains," was caused by the opposition offered to the Deed of Declaration by John Hampson, senior,—who had published the circular mentioned above,—John Hampson, junior, William Eels, Joseph Pilmoor, and a few others. The principal cause of this violent conduct was the omission of their names from the list inserted in the Deed. This is,

* WESLEY'S "Journal," under the date.

indeed, virtually admitted by Hampson, in his "Appeal;" and he confidently expected to raise such a storm of complaint as would induce Wesley to abrogate or modify the course of action which had been adopted. What was urged in this debate is not known; but there can be no question that it was very earnest and impassioned. If John Hampson ventured to introduce into his speech only a few of the terms of invective and reproach printed in his circular, it is certain that there were men in the Conference who, loving Wesley, and approving his conduct, would repel such charges with great indignation. The contention grew so warm, that Mr. Fletcher all but besought the contending parties on his knees to stay the contest, and be reconciled. Principally through his means, an apparent harmony was restored. The four preachers "acknowledged their fault;" and the Conference proceeded to other business. But this harmony was only in appearance. Every one of these four soon afterward left the Connexion. The elder Hampson became an Independent minister; the younger obtained ordination in the Established Church, and a living in Sunderland. Mr. Eels, some time afterward, joined Mr. Atlay in Dewsbury; and Mr. Pilmoor returned to America, but not in connexion with Wesley. As Mr. Hampson, senior, was old and infirm, and the people among whom he laboured very poor, he was generously allowed twelve pounds a year out of the Preachers' Fund.

The efforts of Mr. Fletcher to restore harmony.

During the sittings of this Conference Mr. Fletcher rose, and, addressing Wesley, said, "I fear my successors will not be interested in the work of God, and my flock may suffer. I have done what I could. I have built a chapel in Madeley Wood; and I hope, Sir, you will continue to supply it, and that Madeley may still be a part of the Cir-

cuit. If you please, I should be glad to be put down in the 'Minutes' as a supernumerary." Wesley could hardly bear this, and the preachers were melted into tears. Turning to them, Mr. Fletcher expressed a hope that they would feed his sheep, and nourish them with the same truths which they had been used to hear.

State of the Connexion. Introduction of Methodism into the Norman Isles.

The number of Circuits was seventy-two. The Isle of Jersey and America were not numbered as Circuits; and to these further reference must be made. The numbers reported were 64,207, of which 14,988 were in America; showing an increase in the Societies in Great Britain and Ireland of 3,274. And this increase was very general; for, of the 69 Circuits on the list the preceding year, there was an increase of members in 52.

The ways of God in communicating His holy Gospel to different parts of the human family, both with respect to the times selected and the instruments employed, are truly wonderful; and in few cases more so than in that of the Norman Isles, especially Jersey. These remains of the Norman possessions of William I. had continued to be governed by the old Norman laws, and were favoured with little, if any, of the faithful preaching of the doctrines of evangelical godliness. Yet it was the purpose of God, that the Sun of Righteousness should arise on these beautiful dwellings in the sea, to bring to the inhabitants the knowledge of salvation. But how was this effected? By a chain of providential operation most remarkable.

A young man of Jersey, engaged in trade, named Peter Le Sueur, became proprietor of an estate on the coast of Newfoundland, where he hired, year by year, on his own account, numbers of Newfoundland fishermen. While thus engaged during his periodical visits, he heard the Gospel faithfully preached by the Rev. Lawrence Coughlan,

formerly a Methodist preacher, but then a minister employed by the Society for the Propagation of Christian Knowledge, and also by a Mr. Pottle, a zealous local preacher. By their instrumentality, Mr. Le Sueur was not only greatly instructed, but deeply convinced of sin. In this state of mind he returned to Jersey, and married an amiable young woman of good moral character. But he hesitated to give his heart to God. His prospects in business were very good, everything smiled around him. But so ignorant of real religion were the people generally, both of Jersey and Newfoundland, "that those who spoke to them of the necessity of a change of heart, were looked upon by them as really mad." This young man therefore thought, that by fully devoting himself to God, according to his light and convictions, he exposed his temporal interests to inevitable ruin. But at length he dared all consequences, and sought the mercy of God with all his heart. Very opportunely for this earnest seeker of salvation, a person named John Tantin, who had been recently converted in Newfoundland, returned to Jersey. Le Sueur soon made his acquaintance, and obtained from him further instruction and encouragement in his penitential struggle. Sometimes he spent whole nights in weeping and prayer, his wife ridiculing his most intense agony. At length one morning, whilst engaged in private supplication, he found mercy, and was filled with peace and joy in believing. In the fulness of his heart, he immediately went to his wife, and told her, with tears of joy, what God had done for his soul. She, who had hitherto been utterly regardless of spiritual things, heard with deep concern; the scales fell from her eyes, she saw her spiritual danger, and earnestly sought deliverance. She continued in extreme distress until the following Saturday, when their

prayers were continued until near midnight; then she also found peace, and rejoiced in God her Saviour.

Feeling an anxious desire that their neighbours and friends might share their happiness, they exhorted all around them to flee from the wrath to come; and such unction attended their words, that in a week about a dozen were under conviction of sin, while others bitterly disputed and opposed. Among the former were two of Mr. Le Sueur's uncles, while another was his most violent opposer. These events took place in 1775. What was feared, however, in great measure came to pass. Mr. Le Sueur's friends forsook him, his trade fell off, and he was sometimes brought into great straits: but he and John Tantin persevered in their pious toil. After a while Le Sueur began to exhort and preach, and many were made sensible of their danger by his word. At length, in 1779, a pious man, Captain Brown, who belonged to the Calvinist Society in Poole, was employed to convey cargoes of cattle to Jersey, for the king's troops. On arriving, he inquired if there were any religious people on the island; and was at once directed to Mr. Le Sueur. They took counsel together, and Captain Brown preached in English, and Le Sueur in French. Afterward a blind man, a Calvinist preacher, came to the island, and preached for some time with success. In 1783, the regiment previously stationed at Winchester, many of the soldiers in which had participated in the blessed revival of religion there, was removed to Jersey. These pious men found a famine of the word of the Lord: even the preaching was so tinctured with Calvinism, that it did not satisfy them; and it is said by the best biographers of Wesley, that they "wrote to Mr. Wesley, entreating him to send them a preacher." This is a mistake; they did not write to Wesley, nor imagine that their letter

would ever fall under his eye. They wrote a long letter to their friend, Jasper Winscom, of Winchester, in which they tell him, "We have not any opportunity of hearing the word of God; the service in the church is performed in French, which makes us very unhappy: and, indeed, we may say, we are almost lost." The letter goes on to state, that they have met with some friendly people, but that, as few of them understand English, they can have little intercourse with them: and they express their belief, "that if a preacher were sent who could speak both French and English, the Gospel would shine." They then beg an interest in the prayers of their pious friends at Winchester; and add, in a postscript, that they have consulted the friendly people before referred to, who were Mr. Le Sueur and his companions, and that they all united in the wish to have a preacher sent.

On receiving this letter, Mr. Winscom immediately forwarded it to Wesley with a note, in which he says, "It appears to me, if you can send a preacher acquainted with the French tongue, it will open a door, perhaps, much farther than those islands." When these communications reached Wesley, Mr. Brackenbury happened to be with him; and as he was personally acquainted with Winscom, and had taken an active part in the revival at Winchester, where many of these pious soldiers had been brought to God, his spirit was drawn towards them, and he offered to go to Jersey. Wesley immediately accepted the overture. Winscom's note was dated "December 1st, 1783:" and Mr. Brackenbury, with letters of recommendation from gentlemen in London to others in Jersey, left City Road, and, passing through Winchester, embarked at Southampton, and was in Jersey before the end of that month.

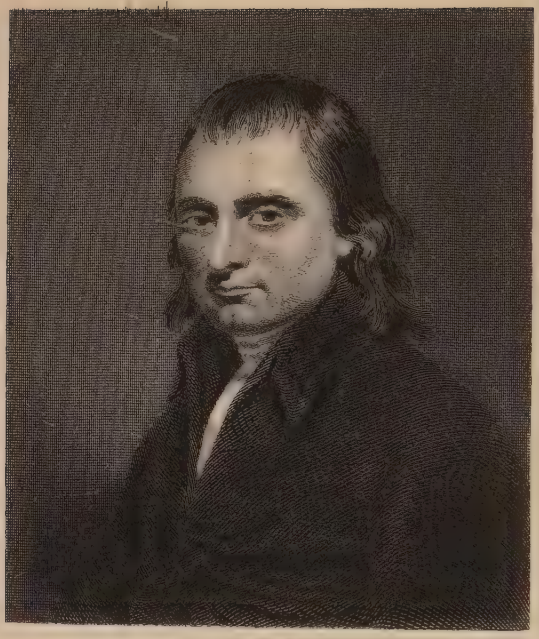
Mr. Le Sueur at first felt very great anxiety to know

what kind of preaching Mr. Brackenbury would give them; but, having heard his first sermon, he returned to his home exulting in the appropriateness and purity of the doctrine which he had heard, and which "he embraced and defended to the last day of his life." The preaching of Mr. Brackenbury was, indeed, eminently successful. The seriously disposed among both French and English listened with delight and profit; and even those who had been benefitted by the ministry of the Calvinist preachers, gathered around Mr. Brackenbury, made common cause with his people, and merged all their differences in the higher objects of growing in grace themselves, and of bringing their neighbours to the knowledge of the truth.

Mr. Brackenbury had not been long on the island before he was seized with fever, and quite laid aside, when we are told by another letter from the pious soldiers to Mr. Winscom, that "the squire's man has preached to us since the illness of his master. He is a fine young man, and greatly esteemed amongst us." This "fine young man" was no other than Alexander Kilham, who afterward obtained such notoriety in the Connexion, and led off the first great secession from it. He was born of Methodist parents in Epworth, (Wesley's native parish,) became converted to God soon after he was eighteen years of age, was pious and useful as a local preacher in his native place, and afterward engaged himself as a servant to travel with Mr. Brackenbury. In this capacity he accompanied him to Jersey.

Mr. Brackenbury and Alexander Kilham. Persecution and progress of the work.

These efforts, however, called forth great opposition, which was displayed in the usual acts of violence, such as breaking the windows of the house where the religious services were held, disturbing the people in the midst of their devotions with noise and outrage, and throwing stones, dirt, and other missiles at the preachers and people.



your Affe Father

B Boswell

There can be no doubt that Mr. Brackenbury's position, as a gentleman living in his own house, did much to check the violence of the persecution; yet it continued for a long time to injure and annoy the people who only desired liberty to worship God in peace. At length a widow of St. Mary's, at whose house the meetings were held, having been long molested by the mob, appealed to the court, and obtained a hearing. "Her case was considered; the rioters were fined, and compelled to find security for their good behaviour in future; in consequence of which peace was procured."* Mr. Brackenbury now laboured with increasing vigour and success. Classes were formed, leaders appointed, local preachers raised up, and all the organization of Methodism brought into useful operation.†

The twelfth American Conference was begun at Ellis's chapel in Virginia, on the 30th of April, and thence adjourned, and afterward closed at Baltimore on the 28th of May following. The number of preachers was 83, being an increase of 1; and the number of members 14,988, being an increase of 1,248. A letter from Wesley was read, which he had written at Bristol, October 3rd, 1783. In this communication he very earnestly urged on the American Societies, 1. To adhere steadily to the Methodist doctrine and discipline, as set forth in his authorized works, and the "Minutes" of the English Conference. 2. To receive no preachers coming from England, unless fully accredited by himself. 3. Not to receive any preachers, however accredited, who will not be subject to the American Conference. 4. Not to receive any who hesitate to acknowledge Francis Asbury as general assistant. This

The twelfth American Conference.

* "Methodist Magazine" for 1820, p. 295.

† See "Methodist Magazine" for 1820, pp. 801–808; MS. History of Methodism in Hampshire.

communication closes with an intimation that the work of God is in the greatest danger from preachers coming from England, or arising in America, speaking perverse things, or teaching strange doctrines, especially Calvinism: and the American Methodists are urged to guard against such with great care.

Its proceedings. Wesley ordains ministers for America.

At this Conference the American preachers passed several resolutions: 1. For raising money by yearly subscriptions in every Circuit, towards building new chapels, and discharging the debts on some of those already built. 2. For carrying into effect the resolve of the last Conference against slavery, *except in Virginia*. 3. To improve the singing, by keeping close to Wesley's tunes and hymns. And, 4. To conform to his advice, with respect to preachers coming from Europe, according to the letter just referred to. There was a considerable revival in some of the frontier settlements this year; and the prospects of extended usefulness throughout the Societies were brightening every day.

It is a remarkable fact, that as, at the English Conference this year, the Deed of Declaration, which gave consistency and permanence to Methodism in Britain, was announced as enrolled and in operation; so, at the same assembly of his preachers, Wesley determined upon carrying out the measure which, under God, has been the means of raising the Methodist Societies in America into the state of a Christian Church.

There is scarcely any action which occurred in the long and eventful life of the founder of Methodism, of more intrinsic importance than that which effected this great object, and perhaps not one which has been more fiercely and foully censured. It is necessary, therefore, to give a clear and faithful account of the whole proceeding.

Notwithstanding the early zeal of Wesley for Church

order, and his continued adherence to the National Establishment, he had been convinced that bishops and presbyters are essentially of the same order in the Christian Church, and consequently that whatever religious right or power is inherent in the one, is equally possessed by the other; and therefore that both are equally authorized to ordain, or set apart, suitable persons for the office of the Christian ministry.

It was not, therefore, from any sense of inability, that Wesley allowed his preachers in England to remain in the position of laymen, and the great majority of his Societies to continue without the administration of the sacraments in their own places of worship. He fully believed, that he possessed the scriptural power and right to supply all this want,—to place his Societies everywhere in the position of Churches, and himself in the character of a scriptural bishop over the largest spiritual flock in the country. And it would be well if those who sneer at the conscientiousness of this great and good man, and dilate on his ambition and love of power, would trouble themselves to reconcile these ascriptions of character with his conduct in this respect. Why did not Wesley take this course? Because he considered the orders of ministry in the Established Church reasonable and useful as human arrangements; and because he felt conscientiously bound to remain all his life in communion with this Church, and, as far as in him lay, to keep his people in the same path. To secure this object, he subjected himself and them to violent persecution,—from which the plea of Dissent would have given full protection,—and retained his Societies in a disadvantageous and anomalous position. And, so long as the American colonies were subject to the British government, he pursued a similar course in that country.

When, however, the United States were recognised as independent, and England had renounced all civil and ecclesiastical authority over them; then Wesley felt that there remained no reason why he should deprive the Societies in that country of those privileges which in their case especially were necessary to their religious stability, which they could obtain from no other source, and which he was perfectly competent to communicate. He accordingly ordained Dr. Coke as a superintendent presbyter, with power to appoint ministers; and he also ordained Richard Whatcoat and Thomas Vasey as presbyters or ministers to serve in these Societies; it being understood that, on his arrival in America, Dr. Coke should ordain Mr. Asbury as superintendent presbyter, to have co-ordinate authority with himself; and that Dr. Coke and he should, from among the preachers in America, ordain a sufficient number to administer the sacraments to the whole of the Societies.

Those who maintain the existence of bishops, priests, and deacons by divine right as distinct orders, will necessarily object to this course. Charles Wesley, eminent as a Christian, excellent as a minister, did so. But, strange to say, the most violent impugners of these measures were found amongst those who, like Dr. Whitehead, did not dare to object to the principle which lay at the foundation of the whole case; namely, that bishops and presbyters are essentially and scripturally of the same order. The arguments of Lord King, the assertions and authority of Jerome and other primitive fathers, removed all doubt of the soundness of this principle from their minds; and therefore, foiled in this respect, but determined to censure, they violently maligned the conduct of Wesley throughout the whole course of this proceeding.

In narrating all the steps by which this important object was accomplished, it is desirable to place the documents which exhibit the meaning and design of the several parties fully before the reader. After the subject had occupied Wesley's anxious attention for twelve months, it was arranged at the Leeds Conference, that the persons who were to assist him in this important business should meet at Bristol on the 9th of August. Mr. Fletcher was present at the Conference, and took part in the deliberations. He is in consequence referred to by Dr. Coke in his communication with Wesley. But although, in the consultations at Leeds, the end to be attained was fully agreed on, the means by which it was to be secured had not been settled.

Important as this juncture was to the transatlantic Methodist Societies, and indeed to all the parties concerned, it was doubly so to Dr. Coke, who was by these arrangements to be charged with a mission of the greatest importance and responsibility. He, therefore, having maturely considered the whole case in all its bearings, sent the following letter to Wesley before the time appointed for the meeting :—

"HONOURED AND DEAR SIR,

"THE more maturely I consider the subject, the more expedient it seems to me, *that the power of ordaining others should be received by me from you*, by the imposition of your hands; and that you should lay hands on brother Whatcoat and brother Vasey, for the following reasons: 1. It seems to me the most scriptural way, and most agreeable to the practice of the primitive Churches. 2. I may want all the influence in America which you can throw into my scale. Mr. Brackenbury informed me at

Leeds, that he saw a letter in London from Mr. Asbury, in which he observed, 'that he should not receive any person deputed by you to take any part of the superintendency of the work invested in him;' or words which evidently implied so much. I do not find any the least degree of prejudice in my mind against Mr. Asbury,—on the contrary, a very great love and esteem; and I am determined not to stir a finger without his consent, unless mere sheer necessity obliges me; but rather to lie at his feet in all things. But as the journey is long, and you cannot spare me often, and it is well to provide against *all events*, and an authority *formally* received from you will (I am conscious of it) be fully admitted by the people; and my exercising the office of ordination, without that formal authority, may be disputed, if there be any opposition on any other account; I could, therefore, *earnestly* wish you would exercise that power in this instance, which I have not the shadow of a doubt but God hath invested you with for the good of the Connexion. I think you have tried me too often to doubt whether I will in any degree use the power you are pleased to invest me with, farther than I believe absolutely necessary for the prosperity of the work. 3. In respect of my brethren, (brothers Whatcoat and Vasey,) it is very uncertain indeed whether any of the clergy mentioned by brother Rankin will stir a step with me in the work, except Mr. Jarratt; and it is by no means certain that he will choose to join me in ordaining; and propriety and universal practice make it expedient that I should have two presbyters with me in this work. In short, it appears to me, that everything should be prepared, and everything proper be done that can possibly be done, *this side the water*. You can do all this in Mr. C——n's house, in your chamber; and afterwards

(according to Mr. Fletcher's advice) give us letters testimonial of the different offices with which you have been pleased to invest us. For the purpose of laying hands on brothers Whatcoat and Vasey, I can bring Mr. Creighton down with me, by which you will have two presbyters with you. In respect of brother Rankin's argument, that you will escape a great deal of odium by omitting this, it is nothing. Either it will be known, or not known: if not known, then no odium will arise; but if known, you will be obliged to acknowledge that I acted under your direction, or suffer me to sink under the weight of my enemies, with perhaps your brother at the head of them. I shall entreat you to ponder these things.

"Yours most dutiful,

"T. Coke."

To apprehend the proper character and bearing of the sentiments and advice in this letter, it is necessary to remember that, after the most mature deliberation, it was agreed by Wesley, Fletcher, Coke, and others in Leeds, that it was desirable and highly important that some one should be sent to America, to ordain certain preachers, that they might be qualified to administer the sacraments to the Societies. This question had been settled by the deliberations of these ministers; it did not arise out of the Doctor's letter, nor was it in any way owing to it. On the contrary, Dr. Coke's letter was occasioned by this determination. This being the case, what reasonable objection can be taken to the Doctor's epistle? Surely, if any person was competent to set apart men to administer the sacraments to the Methodist Societies in America, Wesley was that man. It certainly would not be fair to a young man like Dr. Coke, to send him to America, to undertake

this work, without explicit and formal authority from Wesley. Supposing the latter had died, whilst the Doctor was on the voyage, what but this formal authority could justify him in the course which he was sent out expressly to pursue? It seems, therefore, that the suggestions of Dr. Coke were wise and prudent.

Wesley evidently thought so; for he adopted them fully. He desired Dr. Coke to bring down Mr. Creighton, as proposed; and, with the assistance of these two ministers, he ordained Mr. Richard Whatcoat and Mr. Thomas Vasey presbyters for America. He afterwards ordained Dr. Coke as superintendent, giving him letters of ordination under his hand and seal, and at the same time the following letter to be printed and circulated in America:—

"Bristol, *September* 10*th*, 1784.

"To Dr. Coke, Mr. Asbury, and our other Brethren in North America.

"By a very uncommon train of providences, many of the provinces of North America are totally disjoined from their mother country, and erected into independent States. The English government has no authority over them, either civil or ecclesiastical, any more than over the States of Holland. A civil authority is exercised over them partly by the Congress, partly by the Provincial Assemblies. But no one either exercises or claims any ecclesiastical authority at all. In this peculiar situation, some thousands of the inhabitants of these States desire my advice; and, in compliance with their desire, I have drawn up a little sketch.

"Lord King's account of the primitive Church convinced me, many years ago, that bishops and presbyters are the same order, and consequently have the same right to

ordain. For many years I have been importuned, from time to time, to exercise this right by ordaining part of our travelling preachers. But I have still refused, not only for peace sake, but because I was determined as little as possible to violate the established order of the National Church, to which I belonged.

"But the case is widely different between England and North America. Here there are bishops who have a legal jurisdiction. In America there are none. Neither any parish ministers. So that, for some hundreds of miles together, there is none either to baptize or to administer the Lord's Supper. Here, therefore, my scruples are at an end; and I conceive myself at full liberty, as I violate no order, and invade no man's right, by appointing and sending labourers into the harvest.

"I have accordingly appointed Dr. Coke and Mr. Francis Asbury to be joint superintendents over our brethren in North America; as also Richard Whatcoat and Thomas Vasey to act as elders among them, by baptizing and administering the Lord's Supper. And I have prepared a Liturgy, little differing from that of the Church of England, (I think the best constituted national Church in the world,) which I advise all the travelling preachers to use on the Lord's day in all the congregations, reading the Litany only on Wednesdays and Fridays, and praying extempore on all other days. I also advise the elders to administer the Supper of the Lord on every Lord's day.

"If any one will point out a more rational and scriptural way of feeding and guiding these poor sheep in the wilderness, I will gladly embrace it. At present, I cannot see any better method than that I have taken.

"It has, indeed, been proposed to desire the English bishops to ordain a part of our preachers for America.

But to this I object, 1. I desired the Bishop of London to ordain only one, but could not prevail. 2. If they consented, we know the slowness of their proceedings; but the matter admits of no delay. 3. If they would ordain them *now*, they would likewise expect to govern them. And how grievously would this entangle us! 4. As our American brethren are now totally disentangled both from the state and from the English hierarchy, we dare not entangle them again either with the one or the other. They are now at full liberty simply to follow the Scriptures and primitive Church. And we judge it best, that they should stand fast in that liberty, wherewith God has so strangely made them free.

"JOHN WESLEY."

The measures thus devised adopted by the American Conference.

Thus furnished, Dr. Coke and his companions sailed for New York, and arrived in that city November 3rd, 1784. Information of what had been done by Wesley, and of what was farther proposed to be done, having been communicated to the preachers and people of the American Societies, a Conference was summoned: and on December 25th sixty out of eighty-three of the preachers assembled at Baltimore. Dr. Coke presided, assisted by Mr. Asbury. The first act of this Conference was, by a unanimous vote, to elect Dr. Coke and Mr. Francis Asbury general superintendents. This being done, Mr. Asbury was by Dr. Coke—assisted by the Rev. Mr. Otterbein, a clergyman of the German Church—successively ordained deacon, presbyter, and superintendent; and received from Dr. Coke, under his hand and seal, a certificate of his ordination.* Twelve of

* "*Know all men by these presents*, That I, Thomas Coke, doctor of civil law, late of Jesus College, in the university of Oxford, presbyter of the Church of England, and superintendent of the Methodist Episcopal Church

the American preachers were then elected elders or presbyters: two of these were destined for Nova Scotia. John Dickens, Caleb Boyer, and Ignatius Pigman were also elected deacons.

It is not necessary now to defend at length a measure advisedly taken by the united concurrence of Wesley, Fletcher, and Coke. The result of these arrangements, in the extension of the Church of Christ, and their vast influence on the Christianity of the world, are too grand in their character, and enduring in their operation, to need apology in these days. If Wesley had accomplished nothing, in the whole course of his laborious and extended life, but the organization and consolidation of Methodism in America, he would be entitled to the highest regard as the apostle of modern times.

Happy result of these measures.

The American Societies were thus constituted a separate Christian Church, and furnished with all the means and agencies for administering the doctrines and ordinances of

in America; under the protection of Almighty God, and with a single eye to His glory; by the imposition of my hands and prayer, (being assisted by two ordained elders,) did on the twenty-fifth day of this month, December, set apart Francis Asbury for the office of a deacon in the aforesaid Methodist Episcopal Church. And also, on the twenty-sixth day of the said month, did, by the imposition of my hands and prayer, (being assisted by the said elders,) set apart the said Francis Asbury for the office of elder in the said Methodist Episcopal Church. And on this twenty-seventh day of the said month, being the day of the date hereof, have, by the imposition of my hands and prayer, (being assisted by the said elders,) set apart the said Francis Asbury for the office of a superintendent in the said Methodist Episcopal Church, a man whom I judge to be well qualified for that great work. And I do hereby recommend him to all whom it may concern, as a fit person to preside over the flock of Christ. In testimony whereof, I have hereunto set my hand and seal, this 27th day of December, in the year of our Lord, 1784.

"THOMAS COKE."

BANGS'S "History of the Methodist Episcopal Church," vol. i., pp. 157, 158.

religion to the people of that vast country. And it is but just to observe, that this religious community proved itself worthy of the position in which, by the gracious providence of God, it had been placed. Articles of religion, of a thoroughly scriptural character, were issued. The organization of the Church was developed to meet the wants of every part of the community. A college was planned, and built in 1785. Arrangements were made for producing a religious literature. Indeed, everything requisite for the spiritual culture of the people was provided.

It must not be supposed that the want which Wesley regarded as so great and urgent, and which he provided for in the manner narrated, was unknown to others and unnoticed by them. The state in which the Christianity of America was found at the close of the war was truly deplorable. "Many of the Protestant clergy, from whom the Methodists had hitherto received the sacraments, had left the country, or ceased to officiate; and the Societies generally on that vast continent, amounting to upwards of eighteen thousand members, had none to baptize their children, or administer to them the memorials of their Saviour's passion. The character of the episcopal clergy in America was at this time extremely low. Several of them during the war had acted as soldiers, and others by their negligence and sin were a scandal to their sacred office. This is acknowledged by writers belonging to their own Church.

"In the hope of originating some improvement, Dr. Seabury, an American clergyman, came to England, for the purpose of obtaining consecration to the episcopal office from the English prelates. After waiting two years, his request was denied. He then applied to the Scottish bishops, who had derived their orders from the Nonjurors

of the reign of William and Mary; and from them he at length received the desired honour." * So widely spread was the conviction that the appointment of qualified ministers for the American Churches was an urgent necessity, that the king of Denmark is said to have directed his bishops to ordain for the American ministry such persons as they might deem qualified.†

Opposition to them in England. Charles Wesley's distress.

When this measure became known in England, by the action thus openly taken in America, it provoked very great hostility. Mr. Charles Wesley, in particular, was much grieved. Early in the following year, he wrote to Dr. Chandler, an episcopal minister about to embark for America: "I can scarcely yet believe it, that, in his eighty-second year, my brother, my old intimate friend and companion, should have assumed the episcopal character, ordained elders, consecrated a bishop, and sent him over to ordain our lay preachers in America! I was then in Bristol, at his elbow; yet he never gave me the least hint of his intention. How was he surprised into so rash an action? He certainly persuaded himself that he was right.

"Lord Mansfield told me last year that ordination was separation. This my brother does not, and will not, see: or that he has renounced the principles and practice of his whole life; that he has acted contrary to all his declarations, protestations, and writings; robbed his friends of their boastings; realized the Nag's-Head ordination; and left an indelible blot on his name, as long as it shall be remembered.

"Thus our partnership here is dissolved, but not our friendship. I have taken him for better for worse, till death do us part; or rather, re-unite us in love inseparable.

* Jackson's "Life of Charles Wesley," vol. ii., p. 381. † *Ibid.*, p. 383.

I have lived on earth a little too long, who have lived to see this evil day. But I shall very soon be taken from it, in steadfast faith that the Lord will maintain His own cause, and carry on His own work, and fulfil His promise to His Church, 'Lo, I am with you always, even to the end!'"

Such were the distressing feelings with which Charles Wesley regarded the conduct of his brother in these ordinations. Yet his distress, heightened as it was by a deep religious conviction that this step had perilled the stability of Methodism at home and abroad, did not lead him into any angry feeling. He deeply deplored what had been done; and, after some months of serious deliberation on the subject, wrote his brother as follows:—

"BRISTOL, *August* 14*th*, 1785.

Correspondence between him and his brother.

"DEAR BROTHER,—I have been reading over again your 'Reasons against a Separation,' printed in 1758, and your Works; and entreat you in the name of God, and for Christ's sake, to read them again yourself, with previous prayer, and stop, and proceed no farther, till you receive an answer to your inquiry, 'Lord, what wouldst *Thou* have me to do?'

"Every word of your eleven pages deserves the deepest consideration; not to mention my testimony and hymns. Only the seventh I could wish you to read,—a prophecy which I pray God may never come to pass.

"Near thirty years since then, you have stood against the importunate solicitations of your preachers, who have scarcely at last prevailed. I was your natural ally and faithful friend; and while you continued faithful to yourself, we two could chase a thousand.

"But when once you began ordaining in America, I

knew, and you knew, that your preachers here would never rest till you ordained them. You told me they would separate by and by. The Doctor tells us the same. His Methodist Episcopal Church in Baltimore was intended to beget a Methodist Episcopal Church here. You know he comes, armed with your authority, to make us all Dissenters. One of your sons assured me, that not a preacher in London would refuse orders from the Doctor.

"Alas! what trouble are you preparing for yourself, as well as for me, and for your oldest, truest, best friends! Before you have quite broken down the bridge, stop, and consider! If your sons have no regard for you, have some for yourself. Go to your grave in peace: at least suffer me to go first, before this ruin is under your hand. So much, I think, you owe to my father, to my brother, and to me, as to stay till I am taken from the evil. I am on the brink of the grave. Do not push me in, or embitter my last moments. Let us not leave an indelible blot on our memory, but let us leave behind us the name and character of honest men.

"This letter is a debt to our parents, and to our brother, as well as to you and to

"Your faithful Friend."

To this very earnest letter Wesley sent the following reply, which he also published in the Arminian Magazine, but without the name of the person to whom it was addressed. The line of poetry which it contains was taken from Charles Wesley's elegy on the death of Mr. Jones.

"Plymouth, *August* 19*th*, 1785.

"Dear Brother,—I will tell you my thoughts with all simplicity, and wait for better information. If you agree

with me, well: if not, we can, as Mr. Whitefield used to say, agree to disagree.

"For these forty years I have been in doubt concerning that question, What obedience is due to

'Heathenish priests and mitred infidels?'

I have from time to time proposed my doubts to the most pious and sensible clergymen I know. But they gave me no satisfaction. Rather they seemed to be puzzled as well as me.

"Obedience I always paid to the bishops, in obedience to the laws of the land. But I cannot see that I am under any obligation to obey them farther than those laws require.

"It is in obedience to these laws that I have never exercised in England the power which I believe God has given me. I firmly believe I am a scriptural ἐπίσκοπος, as much as any man in England, or in Europe: for the uninterrupted succession I know to be a fable, which no man ever did or can prove. But this does in no way interfere with my remaining in the Church of England, from which I have no more desire to separate than I had fifty years ago. I still attend all the ordinances of the Church, at all opportunities; and I constantly and earnestly advise all that are connected with me so to do. When Mr. Smyth pressed us to separate from the Church, he meant, 'Go to church no more.' And this was what I meant twenty-seven years ago, when I persuaded our brethren not to separate from the Church.

"But here another question occurs: 'What is the Church of England?' It is not all the people of England. Papists and Dissenters are no part thereof. It is not all the people of England, except Papists and Dissenters. Then we should have a glorious Church indeed! No:

according to our twentieth Article, a particular Church is 'a congregation of faithful people,' (*cœtus credentium* are the words of our Latin edition,) 'among whom the word of God is preached, and the sacraments duly administered.' Here is a true logical definition, containing both the essence and the properties of a Church. What, then, according to this definition, is the Church of England? Does it mean all the believers in England (except the Papists and Dissenters) who have the word of God and the sacraments administered among them? I fear this does not come up to your idea of the Church of England. Well, what more do you include in the phrase? 'Why, all the believers that adhere to the doctrine and discipline established by the Convocation under Queen Elizabeth.' Nay, that discipline is well nigh vanished away, and the doctrine both you and I adhere to.

"All those reasons against a separation from the Church in this sense, I subscribe to still: what then are you frighted at? I no more separate from it now than I did in the year 1758. I submit still (though sometimes with a doubting conscience) to 'mitred infidels.' I do indeed vary from them in some points of doctrine, and in some points of discipline; (by preaching abroad, for instance, by praying extempore, and by forming Societies;) but not a hair's breadth further than I believe to be meet, right, and my bounden duty. I walk still by the same rule I have done for between forty and fifty years. I do nothing rashly. It is not likely I should. The hey-day of my blood is over. If you will go on hand in hand with me, do. But do not hinder me, if you will not help me. However, with or without help, I creep on: and as I have been hitherto, so I trust I shall always be,

"Your affectionate Friend and Brother."

In reply to this, Charles Wesley wrote, renouncing and recanting the line which had been quoted from his poetry, saying, "I never knew of more than one 'mitred infidel,' and for him I took Mr. Law's word." He admitted that his brother was a scriptural *episcopos*, as was every minister having a cure of souls; but professed his faith in the reality of an uninterrupted succession from the apostles; insisted that the act of Dr. Coke involved a separation from the Church; and charged him with rashness, ambition, and schism, "as causeless and unprovoked as the American rebellion."

To this Wesley briefly rejoined:—

"*September* 13*th*.

"Dear Brother,—I see no use of you and me disputing together: for neither of us is likely to convince the other. You say I separate from the Church: I say, I do not. Then let it stand.

"Your verse is a sad truth. I see fifty times more of England than you do; and I find few exceptions to it.

"I believe Dr. Coke is as free from ambition as from covetousness. He had done nothing rashly, that I know. But he has spoken rashly, which he retracted the moment I spoke to him of it. To publish, as his present thoughts, what he had before retracted, was not fair play. He is now such a right hand to me as Thomas Walsh was. If you will not or cannot help me yourself, do not hinder those that can and will. I must and will save as many souls as I can while I live, without being careful about what may possibly be when I die."

A short note from Charles, of no public interest, closed this controversy.

A clear distinction must, however, be drawn between the intention and action of Wesley, and the measures adopted and the language employed by Dr. Coke and his coadjutor in America.

Wesley intended neither more nor less than to supply an urgent existing necessity. There was, at that time, no authorized means of appointing ministers of religion in the United States. Preachers could be multiplied, as men were called and qualified by the gifts of the Spirit for the duty of calling sinners to repentance; but although there were in the whole land but few who regarded themselves as empowered to administer the sacraments, there was no power in either the Established Church or among the Methodists to appoint any other person to this necessary and important office; so that, unless some step were soon taken, as death and other causes removed the existing ministers, the whole country would have been left destitute, or men must have been driven to take this office to themselves.

Much exception has been taken to the conduct of Wesley in this affair, because he appointed Dr. Coke to be a superintendent, with power to ordain ministers; the Doctor being previously a presbyter, and, consequently, in the exact ecclesiastical position of Wesley himself. It is true that Dr. Coke was Wesley's equal as a presbyter; but neither he, nor any other person, stood in the same relation to the preachers and Methodists of America as Wesley did. And it is not clear that they would have recognised any ordination which did not originate in him, whom they revered as their spiritual father, and the founder of the Societies. In consequence of this relationship, Wesley regarded himself as at liberty, not only to appoint ministers, but also to authorize Dr. Coke and Mr. Asbury to make such appoint-

ments. But in doing this he assumed no pomp or parade. He has been vilely censured for not taking this action openly. It did not suit his large views and spiritual-mindedness to adopt such a course. He supplied the want, but he did it in privacy and without ostentation, giving to Coke and Asbury the modest appellation of "superintendents."

When, however, he found that the title of "bishop" had been assumed, that a college had been projected, and that the names of Coke and Asbury were combined in its designation,—it being called "Cokesbury College,"—he proved that he was as prompt to rebuke undue assumption, as he was ready to dare opposition in the service of his Master. This is sufficiently apparent in the terms of the following letter to Mr. Asbury:—

Wesley rebukes Coke and Asbury. Purity of his intention.

"There is a wide difference between the relation wherein you stand to the Americans, and the relation wherein I stand to all the Methodists. You are the elder brother of the American Methodists: I am, under God, the father of the whole family. Therefore I naturally care for you all in a manner no other person can do. Therefore I in a measure provide for you all; for the supplies which Dr. Coke provides for you, he could not provide were it not for me, were it not that I not only permit him to collect, but also support him in so doing.

"But in one point, my dear brother, I am a little afraid, both the Doctor and you differ from me. I study to be little; you study to be great. I creep; you strut along. I found a school; you a college! nay, and call it after your own names! O, beware, do not seek to be something! Let me be nothing, and 'Christ be all in all!'

"One instance of this, of your greatness, has given me great concern. How can you, how dare you, suffer your-

self to be called 'bishop?' I shudder, I start at the very thought! Men may call me a knave or a fool, a rascal, a scoundrel, and I am content: but they shall never, by my consent, call me 'bishop!' For my sake, for God's sake, for Christ's sake, put a full end to this! Let the Presbyterians do what they please, but let the Methodists know their calling better." *

Whatever difference of opinion may exist as to some of the opinions put forth in this letter,—and especially as to the wisdom and expediency of giving an episcopal name and character to the Methodist Societies of America,—there can be none as to the purity and earnestness of that godly jealousy and zeal which dictated these advices. True to his grand design of spreading scriptural holiness through the earth, he saw an evil in every approach to human aggrandizement and glorying, and laboured only for the honour of his Saviour in the salvation of mankind.

In the course of this year, William Moore, one of the preachers on the Plymouth Circuit, made a party at Devonport and left the Connexion, taking about forty of the members with him. His chief cause of complaint was the Deed of Declaration.

The Conference of 1785. Its proceedings.

The forty-second Conference was held in London, and began on the 26th of July, 1785. Wesley observes, "About seventy preachers were present, whom I invited by name. One consequence of this was, that we had no contention or altercation at all; but every thing proposed was calmly considered, and determined as we judged would be most to the glory of God." † This statement deserves very serious attention. Wesley had previously allowed

* Wesley's "Works," vol. xiii., p. 71.

† Wesley's "Journal," vol. iv.

uninvited preachers to attend. In consequence of this there was, at the last Conference, a very violent opposition manifested against the most important measure of the day, —the Deed of Declaration. But as that Deed had clearly and legally defined the plan of government to be observed in Methodism after the death of Wesley, he was determined to finish the controversy, by calling to the Conference none but the preachers in whom he had the fullest confidence. This was necessary, not only in regard to the past, but also for the present and the future. And Wesley proceeded to provide, as far as circumstances permitted, for the spiritual wants of his people. He accordingly informs us in his "Journal" under this date, that, "having with a few select friends weighed the matter thoroughly, I yielded to their judgment, and set apart three of our well tried preachers, John Pawson, Thomas Hanby, and Joseph Taylor, to minister in Scotland; and I trust God will bless their ministrations, and show that He has sent them. On Wednesday our peaceful Conference ended, the God of power having presided over all our consultations." The evident object of these ordinations was to enable Methodist preachers to administer the sacraments in all those places in which the Church of England had no *status*. America had been provided for at the preceding Conference; the wants of Scotland were now met. But these arrangements did not in any way indicate any failing in Wesley's attachment to the National Church. He, on the contrary, subsequently defended and justified these measures, in connexion with the most earnest declaration of his fidelity to the Establishment, and his determination never to allow a separation from it during his life. When sending these ordained ministers into Scotland, he advised the Societies there to use his abridged form of Common Prayer.

Three Methodist preachers ordained for Scotland.

The numbers reported to the Conference of 1785 from the Societies in Great Britain and Ireland are 52,431, being an increase of 3,264; and from the Missions to Antigua and Nova Scotia, 1,408.

As those who objected to the Deed of Declaration had greatly misrepresented the conduct of Wesley in that measure, two short Declarations were drawn up and signed, for the purpose of removing the ill-feeling which had been produced. The first ran thus:—

The Conference approves of the Deed of Declaration.

"London, July 30th, 1785. We, whose names are underwritten, do declare that Mr. Wesley was desired at the last Bristol Conference, without a dissentient voice, to draw up a Deed which should give a legal specification of the phrase, 'The Conference of the People called Methodists;' and that the mode of doing it was entirely left to his judgment and discretion. And we do also declare, that we do approve of the substance and design of the Deed which Mr. Wesley has accordingly executed and enrolled."

This declaration was signed by thirty-nine preachers, being the number of those attending the present Conference who had also attended the preceding one. Those who were not present at the Bristol Conference the year before, signed the following:—

"London, July 30th, 1785. We, whose names are underwritten, but who were not present at the last Bristol Conference, do declare our approbation of the substance and design of the Deed which Mr. Wesley has lately executed and enrolled for the purpose of giving a legal specification of the phrase, 'The Conference of the People called Methodists.'"

This was signed by thirty preachers; so that every preacher attending this Conference testified his approval of the Deed by signing one of these Declarations.

This Conference asserted the unlawfulness of buying or selling books on the Lord's day, of employing hairdressers on that day, and of allowing dancing. From the "Minutes" it appears the number of Circuits was increased to 79.

The happy death of John Fletcher.

Immediately after this Conference, August 14th, 1785, the pious vicar of Madeley was removed to the heavenly world. His death corresponded with his life. The last Sabbath before he died, when scarcely able to stand without support, he conducted a full service in his church, although, from weakness, he several times sank exhausted on the communion table. Yet, notwithstanding his feebleness, there was amazing power and unction in his word. "The people were deeply affected while they beheld him offering up the last languid remains of a life which had been lavishly spent in their service. Groans and tears were on every side." He was taken from the communion table to his chamber, where, full of peace, and love, and God, he gradually sank, until, on the following Sunday evening, his happy spirit escaped to paradise.

Besides the addition reported in the home Societies, three foreign Circuits or Mission Stations now appear on the "Minutes,"—Nova Scotia, Newfoundland, and Antigua. The first of these was supplied by Mr. Freeborn Garretson, who had been sent there by the American Conference of December 25th, 1784, when he, and several other Methodist preachers, were ordained elders of the Church. John M'Geary and James Cromwell were sent from America to Newfoundland.

Methodism in Antigua.

The religious services of the Methodists were first introduced into Antigua by the pious efforts of Mr. Gilbert, who, although Speaker of the House of Assembly, laboured diligently to turn sinners to God, by preaching the Gospel

of Christ. Soon after his death, Mr. John Baxter arrived in the island, having been engaged to serve as an artisan in the dockyard. He had been a member of Society and an exhorter in England, and, on his arrival, he collected the remains of Mr. Gilbert's labours, and preached to the people with great acceptance and success. At the American Conference of this year, Jeremiah Lambert was ordained a minister for Antigua;* and, information of this having reached England, Wesley inserted Lambert's name in the "Minutes," giving J. Baxter, the local preacher, the precedence.† It does not appear, however, that Lambert ever went to this appointment; for, when Dr. Coke was accidentally driven thither in the following year, he says, "Through the superintendence of Mr. Baxter, the assistance of Mrs. Gilbert, and the subordinate instrumentality of the old Irish emigrant, things went on prosperously; so that they had under their care upwards of 1,000 members, chiefly blacks, who were earnestly stretching forth their hands toward God. Nothing remarkable occurred from this period till the year 1786."‡ This statement would not have been made, if an ordained American minister had arrived on the island the preceding year.

The secession of the Hampsons and William Eels.

Among the preachers admitted on trial this year, who afterwards obtained celebrity, we find John Gaulter, Alexander Kilham, and Joseph Entwisle. In the list of those who desist from travelling, are John Hampson, and his son, who seceded on account of the Deed of Declaration. William Eels is not mentioned with them, but is set down in the "Minutes" as third preacher at Manchester,

* Dr. Bangs's "History of the Methodist Episcopal Church," vol. i., p. 158.

† "Minutes," Octavo Edition, vol. i., p. 176.

‡ Coke's "West Indies," vol. ii., p. 436.

although, in a letter to Christopher Hopper, dated "Bristol, August 31st, 1784," about a month after the preceding Conference, Wesley writes: "It was your part to write to me of the behaviour of William Eels, particularly at Warrington, without waiting till I heard it from so many other persons. Seeing I find I cannot overcome him by love, I am at length constrained to let him drop. Pray inform him, he is no longer in the number of our itinerant preachers. I shall to-day send another preacher to supply his place in the Bolton Circuit. I have done all I could to save him, but it is in vain: so I must at length give him up." * This purpose, however, could not have been carried into effect; for Eels's name is found as second preacher in Manchester on the "Minutes" of 1786, and as second for Chester in 1787. It is evident, therefore, that he must have made such submission as induced Wesley to continue him in the ministry for at least three years after he wrote the above letter to Hopper, and probably until about the time that John Atlay joined the Dewsbury seceders, when he saw there was a prospect of his being employed by them.

Methodism had now attracted considerable attention, and its active and powerful agencies frequently called forth very curious inquiry. Toward the end of 1785 a Debating Society in London proposed as a subject for discussion this question: "Have the Methodists done most good or evil?" Thomas Olivers, having heard of this, entered himself as a member of the Society. The subject was debated on three nights,—the 12th, 19th, and 26th of December. On the last-named evening, he delivered a powerful address, in which, after declaring the question to be absurd and blasphemous, he proceeded to show who the

* Wesley's "Works," vol. xii., p. 297.

Methodists were, and whether they had done good or evil. The whole speech was a most effective vindication of Methodism. It was published as a pamphlet in 1819.

During his journey to the west this year, Wesley says he found that the secession of W. Moore, at Plymouth Dock, had done "little hurt. A few turbulent men have left us, but men of a more quiet spirit are continually added in their stead; so that we are gainers by our loss. Such is the wisdom of God."

In the prosecution of his journey through Cornwall, the founder of the Societies was greatly cheered. After having preached in the western parts of the county, he met the stewards at Redruth, and writes, "There is nothing but peace and love among them, and among the Societies from whence they came; and yet no great increase! At our love-feast in the evening, several of our friends declared how God had saved them from inbred sin, with such exactness of sentiment and language, as clearly showed they were taught of God." *

The Conference of 1786. The people desire the administration of the sacraments by the preachers.

The forty-third Conference was held in Bristol, and began on July 25th, 1786. Wesley says, "Our Conference began; about eighty preachers attended. We met every day at six and nine in the morning, and at two in the afternoon. On Tuesday and on Wednesday morning the characters of the preachers were considered, whether already admitted or not. On Thursday, in the afternoon, we permitted any of the Society to be present, and weighed what was said about separating from the Church: but we all determined to continue therein, without one dissenting voice; and I doubt not but this determination will stand, at least till I am removed into a better world." †

* Wesley's "Journal," vol. iv., p. 306. † *Ibid.*, under the date.

It is evident from this brief notice of the subject at the Conference, that the position of the Methodist Societies with respect to the administration of the sacraments by their own preachers, and consequently with regard to their relation to the Established Church, was rapidly becoming the question of the day. The work had now attained such magnitude, that it seemed equally absurd and impossible to attempt much longer to prevent the people from receiving the sacraments from the hands of the men to whom they owed under God their conversion from sin to holiness. The strong feeling which Wesley had against any measure of this kind being introduced into the English Societies, was well known, and generally recognised. He acknowledged an allegiance for life to the Established Church; and he was so greatly loved and so deeply revered by his preachers and people, that, whenever the subject was brought forward, the expression of his strong objections silenced all demand for change. Yet this did not produce conviction. The question was repeatedly agitated, until at length he earnestly requested the continuance of the original practice during the brief remainder of his protracted life. Soon after the Conference of 1785, he wrote and published a defence of his conduct on the entire question, in which he maintains that he will not be deterred from making such arrangements as the present wants of the Societies require, by any fear of their separating from the Church after his death.

In addition to the measures devised for the benefit of the Societies in America and Scotland, he added to the paper referred to, which was published with the "Minutes," the following regulations:—

"Perhaps there is one part of what I wrote some time since, which requires a little further explanation. In

what cases do we allow of service in Church hours? I answer,—

"1. When the minister is a notoriously wicked man.

"2. When he preaches Arian or any equally pernicious doctrine.

"3. When there are not churches in the town sufficient to contain half the people. And,

"4. When there is no church at all within two or three miles."

But lest this allowance should wean preachers or people from the service of the Church, he adds, "We advise every one who preaches in the Church hours, to read the psalms and lessons, with part of the Church prayers; because we apprehend this will endear the Church service to our brethren, who probably would be prejudiced against it, if they heard none but extemporary prayer." *

Other advices were given to the preachers respecting the manner of preaching, the importance of preaching early in the morning, love-feasts, bands, the duties of leaders and stewards, &c.

The progressive increase of the Connexion. William Bramwell.

The list of Circuits and Mission Stations had now reached 88. The numbers as reported showed a considerable increase. Last year the Societies in Great Britain and Ireland contained 52,431 members; this year they had 58,150, being an increase of 5,719. The numbers in the Societies of Nova Scotia, Newfoundland, and Antigua were 2,179; and those in America, according to the English "Minutes," were 19,271, but according to Dr. Bangs's account 20,681.

Among the preachers admitted on trial at this Conference we find the name of William Bramwell. This extraordinary minister and eminent Christian was born in the

* "Minutes," vol. i., p. 191.

village of Elswick, near Preston, Lancashire, in February, 1759. His parents possessed some landed property, and had a numerous family. Being serious and consistent members of the Church of England, they were very punctual in their attendance at public worship, and diligent in inculcating moral and religious duties on their children. William suffered much pain from affliction in his childhood, which seems to have induced a habit of deep seriousness. Having a fine mellow voice, he very early became a member of the church choir. His education was limited to that which could be afforded by the village school; and even this advantage was not enjoyed for any lengthened period, as he was called home at an early age to assist his father in the cultivation of a farm. At the age of fifteen he was sent to reside with his brother, a respectable merchant in Liverpool. But, on complaining to his parents of the dissipated manners of the place, and the injurious influence which he feared it might have on his religious principles and pursuits, he was removed, and placed as an apprentice to a currier at Preston.

Here young Bramwell soon distinguished himself by his diligence, integrity, and fidelity. But although very religious, his religion was little more than Pharisaism. He was not only scrupulously moral in all outward conduct, but strictly attentive to every religious duty. Yet he found that these outward observances could not give him peace. He clearly discovered the existence and operation of evil affections, propensities, and desires, against which he manfully struggled. Sometimes he rose at midnight, and, strewing the floor of the kitchen with rough sand, knelt on his bare knees for hours together, confessing his sins, and praying for pardon. When he had a holiday, he occasionally retired to a wood near Preston, where he climbed a

favourite tree, and remained there till the evening in meditation and prayer. At other times, to mortify the flesh, instead of retiring to rest after the labours of the day, he would walk to his native village, ten miles distant, and return the same night, without calling on his parents or partaking of any refreshment; and, after his severe night-walk, he was ready for his work the next morning. All these labours and austerities failed to give peace to his conscience, or comfort to his mind. But what they could not do, God by His great mercy soon granted. Having conscientiously prepared himself by earnest prayer and self-examination, according to the rubric of the Church of England, for worthily partaking of the Lord's Supper, he obtained the evidence of God's pardoning love whilst receiving the sacred elements from the hands of the Rev. Mr. Wilson, the pious clergyman of Preston. The joy of the Lord then became his strength. His soul was made happy, his bodily health was restored, "and he went on his way rejoicing."

No sooner was he made acquainted with spiritual religion, than he felt the need of fellowship with the people of God. Yet up to this time he knew little of the Methodists, and his impressions were very unfavourable. Hence, when a friend lent him some of Wesley's works, he returned them unread; declaring that "he feared they would destroy his religion."

If, however, Bramwell was not disposed to seek the Methodists, some of them, having heard of the change which had passed on his mind, sought him. It being rumoured that young Bramwell was so religious as to be "beside himself," Mr. Roger Crane tried to gain his acquaintance, and soon became intimate with him. Mr. Crane then invited him to hear the Methodist preachers: this Bramwell refused so steadily, that a shyness soon after arose between the two friends; which was removed by

Bramwell becoming a decided Methodist, under the following remarkable circumstances. He heard an aged woman utter awfully profane and blasphemous language; and, being greatly affected at the circumstance, he wrote to her, pointing out the wickedness of her conduct, quoting several passages of Scripture which in a striking manner showed the guilt and punishment of her sin, and urging her to repentance, that she might avoid this fearful doom. On reading this note, the woman, with an oath, called him a "Methodist devil." When told of this, Bramwell remembered that "all who live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution;" and his being joined with the Methodists by this malignant epithet, made him desirous to know more of them. So, with one of his companions, he went, at the first opportunity, to hear a Methodist preacher, whose congregation was about twelve persons. The next time, Mr. Hopper preached, and Bramwell and his companion joined the Society. His intimacy with Mr. Crane was now renewed. But by this time Mr. Bramwell had lost his evidence of pardoning love. Some time after he had joined the Society, Wesley came to Preston to preach. When Bramwell was introduced to him, the venerable minister said, "Well, brother, can you praise God?" The reply was, "No, Sir." Wesley lifted up his hands, and, smiling, said, "Well, but perhaps you will to-night;" and so it was. During the services of that night, Mr. Bramwell found the comfort he had lost; and he was enabled thenceforth to walk habitually in the light of God's countenance. "This interview was greatly blessed to Mr. Bramwell: the veteran saint had directed this sincere seeker to 'behold the Lamb of God,' and live by faith; he was, therefore, strengthened in the ways of the Lord, entered into deeper communion with God, and became established in the truth."

The grace thus given was soon severely tested. As he knew his parents were exceedingly prejudiced against the Methodists, and as they lived in a village ten miles off, he did not inform them of his union with the despised and persecuted people. But on the expiration of his apprenticeship they removed to Preston, in order to be near their son; and were greatly mortified to find him in close union with the people they most disliked. They threatened to withhold all assistance toward his going into business, and did all in their power to break off this connexion. But William Bramwell was immovable. He had once lost his peace through the want of Christian fellowship and counsel, and, having again found the pearl of great price, he was determined to "sell all" to retain it.

But mere self-preservation did not satisfy the ardent and energetic mind of this young disciple. By his instrumentality, prayer-meetings were established at five o'clock in the morning; he was made the leader of a class; and his desire for the salvation of souls was so intense, that he soon began to exhort sinners "to flee from the wrath to come." His labours in this good work were extensive and successful. Dr. Taft states that, in a short time after the conversion of Mr. Bramwell, there was a blessed revival of the work of God in Preston, and the Society was soon nearly doubled. And when Wesley visited the town in May, 1781, this entry was made in his "Journal:" "I went on to Preston, where the old prejudice seems to be quite forgotten. The little Society has fitted up a large and convenient house, where I preached to a candid audience; every one seemed to be considerably affected. I hope in some the impression will continue."

In his zeal for the salvation of others, William Bramwell did not neglect his own soul. He saw the necessity

of the full salvation of the Gospel, and thus narrates his experience: "I was for some time deeply convinced of my need of purity, and sought it carefully with tears, entreaties, and sacrifice; thinking nothing too much to give up, nothing too much to do, or to suffer, if I might but attain this pearl of great price. Yet I found it not; nor knew the reason why, till the Lord showed me I had erred in the way of seeking it. I did not seek it by 'faith alone,' but, as it were, by 'the works of the law.' Being now convinced of my error, I sought the blessing by faith only. Still it tarried a little, but I waited for it in the way of faith. When in the house of a friend at Liverpool, whither I had gone to settle some temporal affairs previously to my going out to travel, while I was sitting," he said, "as it might be on this chair," (pointing to the chair on which he sat,) "with my mind engaged in various meditations concerning my present affairs and future prospects, my heart now and then lifted up to God, but not particularly about this blessing, heaven came down to earth; it came to my soul. The Lord for whom I had waited came suddenly to the temple of my heart; and I had an immediate evidence that this was the blessing I had for some time been seeking. My soul was then all wonder, love, and praise. It is now" (this holy minister proceeds to say, referring to the time when he wrote) "about twenty-six years ago; I have walked in this liberty ever since. Glory be to God! I have been kept by His power. By faith I stand. In this, as in all other circumstances, I have proved the devil to be a liar. He suggested to me, a few minutes after I had received the blessing, that I should not hold it long; it was too great to be retained; and that I had better not profess it.

"I walked," he adds, "fifteen miles that night, to a

place where I had an appointment to preach; and, at every step I strode, the temptation was repeated, 'Do not profess sanctification; for thou wilt lose it.' But in preaching that night the temptation was removed, and my soul was again filled with glory and with God. I then declared to the people what God had done for my soul; and I have done so on every proper occasion since that time, believing it to be a duty incumbent upon me. For God does not impart blessings to His children to be concealed in their own bosoms, but to be made known to all who fear Him, and desire the enjoyment of the same privileges."

From this statement we learn that Mr. Bramwell was made a witness of entire sanctification, after he had resolved to relinquish his temporal pursuits, and devote himself to the work of the ministry. Such a baptism of the Spirit was a rich preparation for the various trials and privations which a Methodist minister was called to endure in those days.

Yet, rich as this devoted man was in holy experience, he had great difficulty in clearly tracing the way of the Lord respecting him. On one occasion, while crossing over Preston Moor, he was asked if he knew where the Rev. Isaac Ambrose was accustomed to spend a month in retirement every year, and employ himself in meditation and prayer. Mr. Bramwell replied, "No! but under a certain hill near this place, where there was a large sand-hole, I once spent thirty-six hours together, in retirement and prayer to the Lord that I might know His will concerning me."

Nor is the existence of very deep and embarrassing concern to be wondered at, when the circumstances of the case are considered. Mr. Bramwell had now taken a house and

shop for business on his own account. He had formed a matrimonial engagement with Miss Byrom, a pious young lady, who had been converted under his preaching. His parents had become nearly reconciled to Methodism, and sometimes even professed to esteem it. When every thing thus smiled on him, and his future prospects were very cheering, Dr. Coke wrote to him several times, earnestly requesting him to retire from business, and give himself up to the work of the Gospel. This application might easily have been turned aside, had not a solemn conviction in his own mind responded to the call. This response, indeed, was not at first clear; his mental conflicts amounted to agony, before he was quite assured what was the will of God concerning him. At length this was made apparent. Having arranged with Dr. Coke that he was to be at liberty to marry after he had travelled one year, Mr. Bramwell went to the Kent Circuit, in December, 1785; and at the Conference of 1786 he was regularly appointed on the "Minutes" to the same sphere of labour; where he was made very useful in winning souls to Christ, and in building up believers in the faith.*

Remarkable case of Messrs. Keighley and Burbeck.

At this Conference, Joshua Keighley, Thomas Bartholomew, and Edward Burbeck, were appointed for the ensuing year to Inverness. Mr. Bartholomew had travelled in the Circuit the preceding year; so he was already on the ground. But as Mr. Keighley was in Pembroke, and Mr. Burbeck in the Dales, they met by appointment at Aberdeen, to journey in company to their Circuit. They travelled together until, "approaching within two miles of Keith, on that high hill which overlooks it, in the dusk of the evening, about sunset, they beheld about twenty yards before them a dark shade, like a screen drawn right across

* "Memoir of the Rev. William Bramwell," by the Rev. Thomas Harris.

the road. They took courage and rode up to it, which divided and opened like a two-leaf gate; and as they passed through, an audible voice said, 'You may pass on to your Circuit, but shall never return to England.' They passed on, and rested for the night at Keith. The next day at noon they reached Elgin, where Mr. James Gray resided, who called on them, and found Mr. Keighley reading, Mr. Burbeck having gone to bed, as he had not slept the preceding night, thinking of the vision and the voice. Mr. Keighley then told Mr. Gray what had occurred. The preachers passed on to Inverness, and entered on the work of the Circuit. In the following spring, Mr. Keighley one night dreamed that he was condemned to die on the morrow. He requested that the judge would allow him to go and to acquaint his father with his fate, and prepare him for the shock: which as soon as he had done, the judge appeared to him again, and said, 'I have got you a short respite, but, depend upon it, you shall die in Scotland.'"

The ensuing Conference was to meet on the 31st of July. These preachers continued in the diligent prosecution of their work until toward the end of that month, when Mr. Keighley was seized with brain fever, and died on the eighth day. The news of his death arrived too late to prevent his appointment; so he was set down to travel the ensuing year at Edinburgh, and Mr. Burbeck was appointed to Blackburn. Four days after Mr. Keighley was taken ill, Mr. Burbeck left Inverness, anxious, if possible, to defeat the prediction. He went on to Elgin, and lodged with Mr. Gray; but, in pursuing his journey, he was taken ill four miles before he came to Keith, was carried thither sick of fever, and died on the ninth day. Mr. Gray, who had this account from the lips of these ministers in repeated conversations, conducted the funeral of Mr. Keighley, and sent

a statement of these strange facts to the "Methodist Magazine," and supplied further particulars in a letter dated "August 24th, 1787;" so that the account rests on undoubted authority.* There were other circumstances connected with the death of Mr. Keighley, which made his sudden removal peculiarly afflictive; but they are sufficiently indicated in the record of his death on the "Minutes." "He was a young man deeply devoted to God, and greatly beloved by all who knew him. He was

> 'About the marriage state to prove,
> But death had swifter wings than love.'"†

The case of the Rev. Peard Dickenson

This year gave Wesley the zealous services and hearty co-operation of a pious clergyman, the Rev. Peard Dickenson, a native of Devonshire. His father held a respectable situation under the commissioners of excise, and afterwards inherited considerable landed property in Devon. The subject of our present notice was early impressed with the importance of spiritual religion. His desire was to be educated for the Church; but his father, fearing the expenses of a residence at Oxford, sent him to Bristol, intending to devote him to business. It happened, however, that the mistress of the family in which he was placed was a Methodist. She, finding him serious and moral, invited him to accompany her to the Methodist preaching. There he was instructed, and greatly stimulated in his inquiry after truth: he soon joined the Society, and in a short time obtained the pardon of his sins, and rejoiced in a sense of his adoption into the family of God. In the experience of salvation, his desires to prepare for entering the Christian ministry revived with increasing strength; and

* "Methodist Magazine" for 1818, p. 206; WALKER'S "Methodism in Halifax," p. 156.

† Octavo "Minutes," vol. i., p. 201.

his indisposition for trade became so apparent, that his father, at length, being in improved circumstances, sent him to Oxford. Mr. Dickenson graduated in an honourable manner, retaining his simplicity of character and earnest piety, was ordained, and almost immediately employed to assist the venerable Vincent Perronet at Shoreham, who was then unable, from increasing infirmities, to discharge the duties of his office. On the death of Mr. Perronet, an effort was made to secure Mr. Dickenson, who for three years had given great satisfaction to the parishioners, as his successor. But the prebendary to whom the presentation in due course belonged, insisted on his right; another clergyman was presented, and he soon found a curate more to his mind. Mr. Dickenson afterward spent some time in Lincolnshire, assisting Mr. Dodwell, of Welby, near Grantham, when he received overtures from Wesley, which issued in his being appointed as one of the clergymen to conduct service at the New Chapel, City Road, where he continued to labour through the residue of Wesley's life.

By this addition of Mr. Dickenson to Dr. Coke and Mr. Creighton, Wesley was enabled to insure a regular ministration of the sacraments to the metropolitan Societies, and thus to obviate any difficulty on this ground during his life-time.

Dr. Coke made a tour through Ireland, and afterward presided at the Conference there, this year; but there are no records of the business done, except the names of the chapels which were allowed to be built.

Wesley's travels.

On the 9th of August, 1786, Wesley left England to pay a second visit to Holland, where he spent nearly a month, preaching and conversing with the pious and the learned, at Rotterdam, Amsterdam, Haarlem, and Utrecht:

and after his return he pursued his course of incessant travelling, preaching, and visiting the Societies, with his usual diligence and success.

Dr. Coke in Antigua.

Soon after this Conference, Wesley sent Dr. Coke to visit the Societies in the British dominions of North America. He was accompanied by William Warrener, who was intended to labour in Antigua, and William Hammet and John Clarke, as missionaries to Newfoundland. The vessel was driven out of her course by stress of weather, so that on Christmas day they all landed at Antigua. What the Doctor saw there of the fruits of Mr. Baxter's ministry, soon disposed him to regard his being driven out of his intended course as a very remarkable and gracious providence. He accordingly left Mr. Warrener and the two other missionaries at Antigua, as a staff of ministers to promote the work of God in that and the neighbouring islands.

Unpleasantness in the Society at Halifax.

Considerable uneasiness was manifested about this time in the neighbourhood of Halifax, which had been recently made the head of a Circuit. The Society in the town had always evinced a great partiality for the Church service; and Wesley's abridgment of the Liturgy was introduced into all the chapels of the Circuit. But as the congregations in the surrounding villages did not at all sympathize with the partialities of their brethren in the town, and were not only unacquainted with the Liturgy, but also unwilling to have it, they regarded its introduction as an infliction. The unpleasant feeling would, however, in all probability, have soon subsided, if the assistant preacher had not been so indiscreet as to give it tenfold force by reading the service in surplice and bands. This decided the question. At the close of the year the Liturgy was discontinued.

The glory of the Gospel is the salvation of sinners; and the conversion of a very notorious and abandoned individual, about this time, produced a great sensation in Halifax. The name of this person was Joseph Thompson, commonly called "Fiddler Thompson." Some idea of his early life may be gathered from the title of a sort of autobiography which he published: "The Singular Life and Surprising Adventures of Joseph Thompson, of Halifax; in which is shown, among many other Things, the Hardships he endured under two cruel Masters to whom he was Apprentice; the Wickedness of common Fiddlers and Fiddling; how he learnt to ride upon two or three Horses at once; practised Juggling; travelled with a pretended Doctress; narrowly escaped Death by hanging himself in a Joke; was a Fiddler for nine Months on a Cruise in a Privateer; his Cruelty as a Husband and a Father, &c.; stating also how he came to forsake his Sins and Follies, and to fear and serve God, &c. Written by himself." This enumeration sufficiently shadows forth a long and varied course of wickedness; and it seems as if the ungovernable dissoluteness of his life at last brought him under the influence of means which led to his conversion. The conversion of a notorious sinner.

His treatment of his wife had become diabolical. For twelve years he was never known to go to bed sober; and, owing to terrible and aggravated cruelties, his wife determined to leave him. She went to make her complaints to one of her neighbours, a poor afflicted Methodist, named Judith Briggs. Providentially Mr. Suter, the Methodist preacher, called to visit the sick woman just when Thompson's wife was relating her miseries. Mr. Suter felt much interest in the case of the poor woman, and determined to see her husband, if possible. In this attempt he experienced much difficulty; but at length succeeded, and

set before him very clearly the consequences of his reckless and abandoned course. The man afterwards said, "While Mr. Suter was talking to me, God sent every word with power to my heart that he spoke to me, so that I stood before him like a man that was being tried for his life, and was found guilty, and condemned." The effects produced by the Spirit of God through that conversation were effectual and permanent. Drunkenness, cards, and bad companions were from that hour abandoned, and his fiddles sold. He became a zealous Methodist, and, having found salvation himself, was earnest in his efforts to turn others from the ways of sin. He went into the "highways and hedges," holding prayer-meetings, and persuading sinners to come to Christ.

The Conference of 1787.

The forty-fourth Conference was held at Manchester, and began July 31st, 1787. On it Wesley made no observation in his "Journal."

The number of Circuits and Mission Stations this year reached 100, being an increase of 12, namely, 9 places in Great Britain and Ireland, which had not been Circuits the preceding year, and 3 new Mission Stations. A corresponding enlargement is found in the number of members reported to this Conference. In Europe there were now 62,028, being an increase of 3,878. On the Mission Stations the numbers were 2,952, being 773 more than last year; while the numbers in the United States were 25,347, being an addition of about 5,000.

The state of the Connexion.

The steady and continued increase of Circuits and members is a fact which demands serious attention. It shows that the whole system had been organized, and brought into regular and effective operation, and that the blessing of God rested on the labours of His servants. Great

Britain was largely pervaded by this wide-spread evangelical agency. Hundreds of preachers were scattered over these islands, and thousands of other agents were acting as their auxiliaries in this great work; while the indomitable perseverance and vigilant eye of Wesley, under God, kept it in vigorous and effective action.

There were nineteen preachers admitted on trial, this year, in Great Britain; and among them we find the names of Richard Reece and Francis Truscott. The "Minutes" direct, that no person not in the Connexion shall preach in any Methodist chapel without a note from Mr. Wesley, or from the assistant of the Circuit whence he comes; that persons travelling on business are not to expect to be entertained at preachers' houses, some persons being in the habit of thus conveniently quartering themselves; that generally in England no more preachers shall be sent to any Circuit than it can fully provide for; and that no anthems be in future allowed in Methodist chapels, because they cannot "be properly called joint worship."

Wesley ordains ministers for England.

Besides these regulations, it is known that on this occasion Wesley, assisted by the Rev. J. Creighton and the Rev. Peard Dickenson, set apart and ordained, by imposition of hands and prayer, Alexander Mather, Thomas Rankin, and Henry Moore, for the service of the Church in England. Mr. Mather was afterward ordained bishop, or superintendent. Yet, even in this innovation on the order of the Church of England, Wesley gave clear proof that he was influenced solely by what he regarded as the urgent demands of the cause of God. For, whilst making these appointments, he earnestly advised the persons so ordained, "that, according to his example, they should continue united to the Established Church, so far as the blessed work in which they were engaged would permit." *

* Myles's "Chronological History," p. 175.

From these circumstances it is certain that Wesley regarded the religious claims of the Societies under his care as a paramount duty; and, therefore, although he delighted to do his utmost to persuade all his people to remain in close communion with the Church of England, and to receive the sacraments at the hands of her clergy, he nevertheless was alive to the growing feeling, among both his preachers and people,—a feeling which was greatly strengthened by the conduct of many of the clergy toward them. He accordingly considered it his duty to provide for the case of those who earnestly desired the administration of the sacraments in their own places of worship. So far, therefore, were these steps from promoting a separation from the Church, they were intended, and greatly contributed, to maintain the union which he most earnestly desired to perpetuate between his people and the Establishment.

The preachers and chapels licensed.

Another step was taken at this time by Wesley, which looked as if tending to a separation from the Church; but it was clearly induced by necessity, and this rendered it very painful to him,—a circumstance which accounts for the strong terms he employs respecting it. In his "Journal" he observes, "I had a long conversation with Mr. Clulow, (an attorney,) on the execrable Act, called the Conventicle Act. After consulting the Act of Toleration, with that of the tenth of Queen Anne, we were both clearly convinced, that it was the safest way to license all our chapels, and all our travelling preachers; and no justice or bench of justices has any authority to refuse licensing either the houses or the preachers." *

The death of Charles Wesley.

During this Methodistic year, namely, on March 29th, 1788, Charles Wesley departed this life. His brother gave him the following character in the "Minutes" of the next

* Wesley's "Journal," Nov. 3rd, 1787.

Conference. In answer to the question, "Who died this year? *A.* Charles Wesley, who, after spending fourscore years with much sorrow and pain, quietly retired into Abraham's bosom. He had no disease, but, after a gradual decay of some months,

'The weary wheels of life at last stood still.'

"His least praise was his talent for poetry: although Dr. Watts did not scruple to say, that that single poem, 'Wrestling Jacob,' was worth all the verses he himself had written." The hymns which were composed by this sainted man are those which are chiefly used by the Methodist Societies in their worship; and they certainly breathe more of the spirit of true religion than those which have been imported into the Wesleyan Hymn Book from other poets.* The last lines which he composed were the following, which he dictated to his wife when he could scarcely articulate:—

* "There are few things on which the public impression is more at fault than on the QUANTITY of poetry written by Charles Wesley. How common the belief that the six hundred and twenty-six beautiful compositions which form so great a part of our unrivalled Hymn Book, are the *only* productions of his pen! Yet these, which, had he written none other, would have stamped him as the first hymnist the world ever saw, are not a *tenth* of his entire contributions to sacred song. At least twelve or fourteen goodly volumes would be required for a complete edition of his works. His published pieces amount to about four thousand six hundred; and his manuscripts would supply about two thousand more,—making nearly SEVEN THOUSAND 'psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs,' consecrated to the service of religion, during his busy, anxious life.

"This, I believe, forms an amount of sacred verse far greater than any other man ever produced. You may take all the poetry of Watts, Cowper, and Pope; you may throw in the hymnic compositions of many others who have a well-earned name as sacred poets; and they are all out-numbered by the single, prolific pen of the Poet of Methodism."—"Charles Wesley, the Poet of Methodism: a Lecture. By the REV. JOHN KIRK."

"In age and feebleness extreme,
Who shall a helpless worm redeem?
Jesus! my only hope Thou art,
Strength of my failing flesh and heart:
O! could I catch one smile from Thee,
And drop into eternity!"

His character and usefulness.

Charles Wesley was undoubtedly one of the most excellent of Christian ministers; and a poet, whose sacred strains have taught, guided, cheered, and preserved untold myriads of the followers of Christ, and will continue to do so until the end of time. He lived and died an eminent example of high Christian experience, sterling worth, and undeviating principle. He is in fact one of the few exalted men, to whom, as an instrument of good, the Christian world will be indebted throughout all generations.

It is no serious dispraise of him to say, that in one respect he was inferior to his brother John. Charles seemed either to cleave to the Established Church with more earnest tenacity, or not so fully to appreciate the vital importance of the work of God in the Societies as his brother. He certainly did on some important occasions allow his devotedness to the Church to warp his judgment in reference to the prosecution of a scriptural and necessary course of policy for the Methodist Societies. But, considering the magnitude of the work originated and carried on by the instrumentality of the brothers, it is evidently taking too limited a view of it, to suppose that there was no over-ruling Providence in regard to their views and feelings, especially when all else is admitted to be so eminently providential in its operation and development. Who now can say, that the retarding influence of Charles Wesley for a time was not thus rendered subservient to the constitution of the proper character of Methodism, as

was the more enlarged and enlightened judgment of his brother?

Preparatory to the ensuing Conference, Dr. Coke made a fourth visit to Ireland, and presided at the Irish Conference, which began in Dublin on the 8th of July, 1788. No matters of great importance came under the notice of that assembly.

The Conference of 1788.

The forty-fifth Conference began in London, July 29th, 1788. Of it Wesley observes, "I preached at the New Chapel every evening during the Conference, which continued nine days, beginning on Tuesday, July 29th, and ending on Wednesday, August 6th: and we found the time little enough; being obliged to pass over many things very briefly, which deserved a fuller consideration." *

The aggregate number of Circuits and Mission Stations reported to this Conference was 105, being an increase of 5. The amount of members reported was as follows:—Great Britain and Ireland, and the Norman Isles, 66,379; being an increase of 4,351: the West Indies and British North America, 4,235; an increase of 1,283: and in the United States, 31,468; an increase of 3,169.

Its proceedings.

The financial arrangements of the body generally were carefully reviewed, and the manner in which the preachers and their wives were provided for was taken into consideration. The following question and answer sufficiently show the deficiency of the Circuit arrangements of this period: "*Q.* Many of our preachers have been obliged to go from the house of one friend to that of another for all their meals, to the great loss of their time, and to the injury of the work of God. What can be done to prevent this evil in future? *A.* Let every Circuit provide a sufficient allow-

* Wesley's "Journal" under the date.

ance for the preachers, that they may in general eat their meals at their own lodgings." When the great extent and rising importance of the Methodist Societies at this time are fairly considered, the existence of such a cause of complaint is truly wonderful. Nor must it be supposed, that such a resolution as that now recorded had sufficient potency to produce an immediate removal of the evil. It served, however, to point it out, and to mark its baneful consequences: it was, indeed, a standing protest against it, and no doubt operated, if but slowly, yet in a salutary manner. We notice such matters to show the privations and inconveniences endured by noble-minded men, who amid all these toils and trials were successfully evangelizing the country.

In connexion with this minute stands another, which says, "Let every assistant be particularly careful to enforce the weekly collection of a penny from each member of our Society in the class-meetings, that can afford to pay it, and the quarterly collection of a shilling at the quarterly visitation." This prudent regulation, when properly carried out in the spirit in which it was conceived and appointed by Wesley, provided sufficient means for the support of the preachers.

The inadequate provision made for preachers' wives was also severely felt, and the whole case was set forth in the following appeal, which was circulated as the first Pastoral Address, or circular letter sent from the Conference to the several Societies.

"To our Societies in England and Ireland.

"Fifty years ago, and for several years following, all our preachers were single men, when in process of time a few of them married. Those with whom they laboured

maintained both them and their wives, there being then no settled allowance either for the one or the other. But, above thirty years ago, it was found most convenient to fix a stated allowance for both, and this was found by those Circuits where they were stationed; till one year some of the Circuits complained of poverty. Dr. Coke and I supplied what was wanting. The next year, the number of wives increasing, three or four of them were supplied out of the Contingent Fund. This was a bad precedent; for more and more wives were thrown upon this fund, till it was likely to be swallowed up thereby. We could think of no way to prevent this, but to consider the state of the Societies in England and Ireland, and to beg the members of each Circuit to give us that assistance which they can easily do without hurting their families.

"Within these fifty years, the substance of the Methodists is increased in proportion to their numbers. Therefore, if you are not straitened in your own bowels, this will be no grievance, but you will cheerfully give food and raiment to those who give up all their time, and strength, and labour to your service.

"JOHN WESLEY."

"*London, August 2nd,* 1788."

This address, *verbatim,* was published to the Irish Societies from the ensuing Irish Conference, nearly twelve months afterward; thus proving, as Mr. Myles has observed, that Wesley did not use the round numbers in his letter to give the exact dates, but for the purpose of stating facts generally. This is, indeed, evident from a reference to the particular points of history mentioned. The first of these was in 1740, just forty-eight years before; and the second was in the year 1752, exactly thirty-six years previously.

Thirty preachers were received on trial at this Conference, and among them we find the names of John Hickling, John Stephens, and John Riles.*

Attention was also directed to the importance of a rigid adherence to the proper form of settling chapels, and a form of Model Deed was printed in the "Minutes," which differed in many important respects from that previously put forth;† and by a special minute it was decided, "Let no house be built, on any consideration, till the house be first settled on the Conference plan." It was also decided "that no collections be made for preaching-houses after this year, except in the Circuits in which they shall respectively be built."

Methodism and the Church.

Various and important as all these matters were to the well working of the Connexion, there was one topic of all-absorbing interest, on which Wesley in the Conference now gave his last judgment:—it was the relation of the Meth-

* In the first edition of this volume, published in 1857, the following words were added to this sentence: "The first of these still survives, the only connecting link between the preachers of Wesley's time and the Methodist ministry of the present day." So it then was, and that venerable man was still abundant in labours, travelling and preaching with great frequency and effect. That link the intervening months have broken, and Mr. Hickling is gone to his reward. It may be interesting to Methodists of the present day to know, what judgment this last of Wesley's preachers formed of the Methodism of our times. Happily, we can state on the best authority, that he was not one of those who cry, "The former days were better than these." Mr. Hickling, who had a perfect knowledge of both periods, was frequently heard to declare, that the Methodists of the present age are a wiser and a better people, than those with whom he was associated in his youth. And although now freed from brutal persecution, and permitted to worship God in peace, he believed that the labours of Methodist preachers, at present, are more arduous and exhausting than those which he and his early fellow-labourers had to perform.

† See Appendix K, at the end of this volume.

odist Societies to the Established Church. On this subject we find the following record in the "Minutes:"—"*Q.* What further directions may be given concerning the Church of England? *A.* The assistants shall have a discretionary power to read the Prayer Book in the preaching hours on Sunday mornings, where they think it expedient, if the generality of the Society acquiesce with it: on condition that divine service never be performed in the church hours on the Sundays, when the sacrament is administered in the parish church where the preaching house is situated, and the people be strenuously exhorted to attend the sacrament in the parish church on those Sundays." *

But, honest and energetic as these efforts to maintain an union between the Methodist Societies and the Church undoubtedly were, Wesley says that they could not be made so influential as fully to secure the object. Many thousands of the Methodists had known no other ministry than that of their preachers. They had sat under their word in childhood, and had grown up to maturity in constant intercourse with them. The clergy, almost without exception, had treated them with neglect, if not with censure and contempt; and the result was, that no Christian ordinances had been received, excepting through the Methodist ministers. Wesley, therefore, true to his first principle of saving souls as a primary duty, most reluctantly, but of constraint, from time to time, made such alterations of his Rules, as the religious wants of his people imperatively demanded.

As a joint defence and apology on this account, he inserted the following paragraph in his "Journal:"—"One of the most important points considered at this Conference was that of leaving the Church. The sum of a long con-

* Octavo "Minutes," vol. i., p. 208.

versation was, 1. That, in a course of fifty years, we had neither premeditatedly nor willingly varied from it in one article of doctrine or discipline. 2. That we were not yet conscious of varying from it in any one point of doctrine. 3. That we have in a course of years, out of necessity, not choice, slowly and warily varied in some points of discipline, by preaching in the fields, by extemporary prayer, by employing lay preachers, by forming and regulating Societies, and by holding yearly Conferences. But we did none of these things till we were convinced we could no longer omit them, but at the peril of our souls."*

New form of persecution.

It is painful to observe, that whilst Wesley was thus devoting his utmost energy, and his last days, to carry on the work of God with the greatest vigour, and at the same time to preserve his Societies in union with the Church, the conduct of bigoted and unprincipled men made his fidelity to the Establishment the occasion of the most harassing and wicked persecution by which the Methodist Societies had ever been afflicted.

It was well known that the great body of the preachers and people had been taught by their founder to entertain a religious respect for the Church, and to regard themselves as members in communion with her. Yet, as a defence against the violence of brutal men, many of the preachers and chapels were licensed under the Toleration Act.

It was well known that the Act of Toleration was passed mainly for the purpose of affording religious liberty to Dissenters, and especially to free them from the penalties of the Conventicle Act. But Wesley did not imagine that the heads of the Church would adopt a policy so clearly suicidal as to drive a whole people, generally and heartily attached to the Establishment, into the ranks of Dissent:

* "Journal," August 4th, 1788.

in this he was mistaken. Bishops, clergymen, and magistrates, not only refused the Methodists licences for their chapels or preachers, contrary to the letter of the statute; but they also judicially declared such licences invalid, unless the holders of them would not only avow themselves to be Dissenters, but also aver that they scrupled to attend the services and sacraments of the Church. Great numbers of the Methodist preachers and people could not conscientiously do this; and they were in consequence most severely and cruelly persecuted. The excessive barbarity of this conduct greatly affected Wesley, and caused him deeply to ponder the means of relief from this new oppression.

George Lowe an itinerant preacher

Mr. George Lowe, of whom mention has been already made, was this year received as an itinerant preacher, and appointed to the Chester Circuit. He was thirty-eight years of age, and had most maturely considered the question of his call to the ministry; yet it was with great reluctance that he placed himself even then at the disposal of the Church. As this took place but a short time before the death of Wesley, it may be proper to place on record the account which is given of his first Sabbath-day's labours in his Circuit, in order to show the kind of men who at this period were found entering the ranks of the Methodist ministry.

"On the morning of the first Lord's day he preached from, 'Ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full.' On commencing his sermon, he observed the preceptors of two classical academies, with their pupils, seated before the pulpit. The appearance of so much intelligence and learning almost deprived him of the power of utterance. In a short time, however, he recovered his self-possession; and poured forth upon his hearers such a continual stream of evangelical sentiment, and with such

rapidity and fervour, that they were both surprised and affected. He entered the pulpit in the evening, painfully apprehensive lest he should not be able to reach the same elevation of feeling, nor enjoy the same liberty of speech, nor succeed in producing the same visible effects on the people, as in the morning; but it seemed to himself, and to those who heard him, as if the Lord had said, 'From this day will I bless thee.' He selected John iii. 36: 'He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.' While he explained the nature of *faith* and *unbelief*, and described their effects upon the experience and destiny of man, a sacred influence pervaded the congregation, and many were constrained to ask, 'What must we do to be saved?' Mr. Lowe's attention was particularly directed to a young man, whose convictions were so deep, and his distress so great, that he appeared, for some time, to be in convulsions. The friends cried to God on his behalf, and he soon found 'peace in believing.' This young man was subsequently called to the ministry; and, after a brief career of fidelity and usefulness, 'died in the Lord.' The labours and success of this first Sabbath gave a fresh impulse to the faith and zeal of the preacher. He renewed his covenant with God, and again consecrated his time and talents to the service of the Church. He carefully considered the number and relative importance of the various duties devolving upon him on the one hand, and the expectations and claims of God's people on the other, and resolved to be conscientious and punctual in everything. The salvation of men, the primary object of the Christian ministry, filled his mind, and absorbed all the physical and intellectual capabilities of the man."*

* STRACHAN'S "Life and Times of George Lowe."

Strange case of George Lukins.

As Wesley has been so frequently subjected to ridicule and censure for relating accounts of apparent supernatural influence, it may not be amiss to insert here the following extraordinary narrative, which rests on other evidence. In this case a clergyman of the Established Church was the principal mover, and Mr. John Valton one of the seven ministers who assembled on the occasion. The account was written by the late Rev. Joseph Sutcliffe, A.M., Mr. Valton's friend and biographer.

"About this time, the case of George Lukins attracted considerable notice in Bristol, and in all the public papers. I personally knew him; a youth about eighteen, short in stature, and meagre in aspect. He had frequent fits or paroxysms, and was sometimes affected like the Pythonesses, or rather like the Furies, mentioned often by Herodotus and ancient writers. He was cruelly distorted, and uttered foul language; but was often heard to say, that he should be delivered if seven ministers should pray with him. His words at length attracted notice, and the Rev. Mr. Easterbrook, vicar of Temple Church, collected that number to pray with Lukins in the vestry, and see what the Lord would do. They were gentlemen of superior education, and able ministers. Suffice it to say, after the prayers of that morning, Lukins had no more of those horrid distortions, but was employed by Mr. R. Edwards and others as a bill-sticker. Mr. Easterbrook published a plain narrative of the case, an extract of which was inserted by Mr. Wesley in his Magazine. A physician of Bristol replied to Mr. Easterbrook, contending that Lukins was altogether an impostor. The Rev. Thomas M'Geary, A.M., principal of the Kingswood School, and one of the seven, was, as he himself told me, very much of the physician's mind; but, knowing Lukins to be altogether illiterate, he

asked him a question in Latin, and Lukins at once replied in Latin. This carried conviction to the minds of all the gentlemen, that the contortions of the young man were effectuated by an evil influence; and, by consequence, that Lukins was a demoniac. Of this case Mr. Valton writes:—

"'Some time ago I had a letter requesting me to make one of the seven ministers to pray over George Lukins. I cried out before God, "Lord, I am not fit for such a work; I have not faith to encounter a demoniac." It was powerfully applied, "Go in this thy might." The day before we were to meet, I went to see Lukins, and found such faith, that I could then encounter the seven devils which he said tormented him. I did not doubt but deliverance would come. Suffice to say, when we met, the Lord heard prayer, and delivered the poor man.'"

Wesley's continued labours.

Notwithstanding his advanced age, Wesley still continued his almost incessant course of travelling and preaching, detecting neglect in one place, reproving impropriety in another, and encouraging diligence and zeal in a third. In the course of the winter he makes the following observations in his "Journal," on the effect of his advancing age: "About this time I was reflecting on the gentle steps whereby age steals upon us. Take only one instance. Four years ago my sight was as good as it was at five-and-twenty. I then began to observe that I did not see things quite so clear with my left eye as with my right; all objects appeared a little browner to that eye. I began next to find some difficulty in reading a small print by candle-light. A year after, I found it in reading such a print by day-light. In winter, 1786, I could not well read our four-shilling Hymn Book, unless with a large candle; the next year I

could not read letters, if wrote with a small or bad hand. Last winter a pearl appeared on my left eye, the sight of which grew exceeding dim. The right eye seems unaltered, only I am a great deal nearer-sighted than ever I was. Thus are 'those that look out of the windows darkened,'—one of the marks of old age. But I bless God, 'the grasshopper is' not 'a burden.' I am still capable of travelling, and my memory is much the same as ever it was; and so I think is my understanding."* This was written when he was about eighty-five years of age. On Saturday, March 21st, 1789, he wrote, "I had a day of rest, only preaching morning and evening."

On the 29th of March Wesley arrived in Dublin, and, after spending a fortnight in that city, set out for his tour of Ireland, visiting all the principal places, and preaching and inspecting the Societies everywhere. He returned to the capital, June 27th. On the 3rd of July the Conference began, of which he observes, "1. I never had between forty and fifty such preachers together in Ireland before; all of them, we had reason to hope, alive to God, and earnestly devoted to His service. 2. I never saw such a number of preachers before so unanimous in all points, particularly as to leaving the Church; which none of them had the least thought of. It is no wonder that there has been this year so large an increase of the Society." Of this Conference he afterwards added, "Such a body of men I hardly believed could have been found together in Ireland; men of so sound experience, so deep piety, and so strong understanding. I am convinced, they are no way inferior to the English Conference, except it be in number."†

* Wesley's "Journal," December 15th, 1788.

† *Ibid.*, July 3rd and 8th, 1789.

The Conference of 1789.

The forty-sixth Conference was held in Leeds, and began on the 28th of July, 1789.

State of the Societies.

According to the "Minutes," the number of Circuits in Great Britain and Ireland was 99, the same as last year; but the increase in the Mission Stations was 5. The aggregate number of Circuits remained the same, but many changes were made in the names and arrangement of the places.

The numbers in the Societies of Great Britain and Ireland were now 70,305, being an increase of 4,277. On the Mission Stations the members were 3,949, considerably fewer than last year, because those of Newfoundland and Nova Scotia were excluded.

Dewsbury chapel.

The most prominent topic which came before this Conference, was the case of the Dewsbury preaching-house. The facts relating to it are few and simple. A chapel was wanted; application was made to Wesley for leave to make collections and solicit subscriptions for the purpose:* this was granted, money was collected, and the house was built. But the persons who had been named as trustees, although they had previously promised to settle the chapel on the usual Methodist trusts, now positively refused to do so,† and insisted on having power to reject any preacher whom they disliked. Something of this kind was attempted at Birstal in 1782; and in that instance Wesley, being, as he said, "worried down," was induced to comply, and very bitterly regretted his compliance ever after.‡ Here, then, he was determined to stand firm. He saw that the connexional character of the body, and the Methodist itinerancy, were both at stake. This Conference accordingly

* Wesley's Letter to Valton, "Works," vol. xiii., p. 264.

† *Ibid.*, p. 265.

‡ Wesley's "Works," vol. xii., p. 138.

resolved that another preaching-house, to be properly settled, should be immediately erected at Dewsbury; and, to assist in defraying the expense, £208 were subscribed for the purpose by the preachers on the spot.

Secession of Atlay.

The trustees of the first house being thus defeated in their object, by having no appointment made to their chapel at the preceding Conference, had secured John Atlay, Wesley's book-steward, as their minister; and he had engaged William Eels as his assistant, who had been greatly dissatisfied on account of his name not being inserted in the Deed of Declaration. Thus a division was occasioned which destroyed the Society in that place. The testimony of an intelligent eye-witness proves that "envy, strife, uncharitableness, evil-speaking, and almost every evil work abounded. Many were turned out of the way, and many more hindered in their spiritual progress. He used, in after life, to compare the moral desolations he witnessed in Dewsbury and the neighbourhood, to the field of battle after a sanguinary engagement,—many slain, and many mortally wounded. Of the Dewsbury Society, only two members—a good man and his wife, of the name of Drake —adhered to Mr. Wesley. Many were scattered, some of whom went into the world and never returned; and the rest continued for a time under Mr. Atlay, who, with the assistance of Mr. Eels and others, formed Societies at Newcastle, Shields, and other places. These Societies, however, dwindled away, and came to nothing."* Such was the result of the wicked conduct of the Dewsbury trustees, and the unfaithfulness of two Methodist preachers.

Loss of the Dewsbury Society.

These words are used advisedly, and not on *ex parte* evidence. All that Mr. Atlay could say, in defence of

* "Memoirs of the Rev. Joseph Entwisle."

himself and his friends, has been carefully considered.* But this does not disprove the allegation, that Wesley was bound, by every obligation of Christian principle and honourable consistency, to adopt the course he did.

The great importance of Wesley's decision in that case.

It is not denied that to give to trustees a power to displace a preacher would be to destroy itinerancy, and annihilate the connexional character of the body, as every separate body of trustees would then be independent. Yet it is said, Wesley, for the sake of peace, might have conceded the point, and thus have made his preachers and all the Societies a rope of sand, and destroyed all hope of their remaining a united and influential community.

Nor can it be denied that the far greater part of the money subscribed toward the erection of this chapel was given with the understanding that it was to be settled as other Methodist chapels were, and therefore it ought to have been so settled. And surely Atlay and Eels, after having been Methodist preachers so long, were morally bound to continue faithfully to perform the duties of that office, and not to join a party to destroy the work which they had spent so many years in assisting to raise. And that they did this is unquestionable. Mr. Entwisle says, under date "November 22nd, 1788," "Messrs. Atlay and Eels are come to Dewsbury, have got possession of our chapel there, and are opposing, with all their might, Mr. Wesley and the Conference. Trials these of the first magnitude." †

The controversy arising out of this unhappy case produced a rumour that many of the preachers were opposed

* "Letters that passed between the Rev. J. Wesley and J. Atlay, relative to the People and Preaching-house at Dewsbury, with Statement of Facts by Way of Introduction. London: Mathews."

† "Memoirs of the Rev. Joseph Entwisle."

to the plan of settling chapels which had been adopted. To repel this misrepresentation, the following declaration was put forth at this Conference :—

"LEEDS, *July 29th*, 1789.

"WHEREAS it has been affirmed, that many of our itinerant preachers disapprove of settling the preaching-houses upon the Methodist plan : We, whose names are underwritten, do hereby certify, that we entirely approve of the settling of all our preaching-houses on the said plan."

This declaration was signed by 115 preachers, being all who attended this Conference.

Wesley's last journey to the north.

In the spring of 1790 Wesley took his last journey to the north. In his course he preached at Painswick, Tewkesbury, Quinton, and Wednesbury. Of the latter place he says, "The work of God greatly revives. Business has exceedingly decreased," and many have left the town. "So much the more have the poor grown in grace, and laid up treasure in heaven." Dudley, Madeley, and Newcastle-under-Lyne were then visited in succession. Of his preaching at Congleton, he says, "The minister, the mayor, and all the heads of the town were present : so, that I might not overshoot them, I preached on Psalm xc. 12 ; and I believe God applied it to their hearts." One of the hearers on that occasion still survives, (1857,)—Hannah Dale, a Methodist of the old stamp, now in her eighty-sixth year. She has been a member of the Methodist Society more than sixty years, and is still a leader of two classes. At five the next morning Wesley preached again,—it was his last sermon at Congleton. Crowds attended, even at

that early hour, and many of them from the country. Two preachers were with him in the pulpit, and four or five sat in the singers' pew in front of it. After leaving the chapel Wesley called on several of the principal friends.

From this place, the venerable minister proceeded, preaching at Macclesfield, Stockport, Oldham, and Manchester. At the last-mentioned town on Easter-day he says, "We had about 1,600 communicants. I preached morning and evening without weariness; and in the evening lay down in peace." From thence he went through Altrincham, Northwich, and Warrington, to Liverpool, where he observes concerning the congregation, "If those without were added to those within, I believe it would have exceeded even that at Manchester; and surely the power of God was present with them also." He preached at Liverpool again on the following day, as he believed, with effect, and passed on to Wigan; which, he says, was for many years proverbially wicked, adding, "But it is not now what it was; the inhabitants have taken a softer mould. The house in the evening was more than filled, and all that could get in seemed to be greatly affected." The next evening he preached at Bolton, as he says, to "one of the loveliest congregations in England; who, by patient continuance in well-doing, have turned scorn and hatred into general esteem and good-will."

A note is inserted in the printed copies of Wesley's "Journal," stating that "part of the manuscript having been lost, causes a chasm here." This chasm extends from April 10th to May 24th. An interesting part of his labours during this period we can fortunately supply from another source. On leaving Bolton he went into Yorkshire, and preached in the chapel at Bradshaw on a Monday morning in May. The announcement having been

made at Halifax the day preceding, a congregation more than sufficient to fill the chapel assembled at the hour of ten. But, owing to his increasing infirmities, Wesley was unable to reach the chapel till one o'clock, during which interval the congregation remained in the chapel with the greatest possible patience. When he arrived, the scene was truly affecting. As the venerable saint, accompanied by Mr. Bradford and Mr. Thompson, ascended the pulpit stairs, the congregation, fully sensible that they were looking on one they should see no more in the flesh, burst into tears. Mr. Wesley himself was affected; and the feelings of every one were afresh excited, when they beheld him who had been "mighty in words," now requiring the aid of a friend to whisper in his ear the heads of his discourse. Such were his infirmities, that he was obliged to be supported by the two ministers in the pulpit; and more than once his memory entirely failed him, so that their help was necessary to enable him to continue his discourse.

"An awful occurrence took place on this day, which demands historic record. A large crowd of persons was assembled near the chapel, anxiously waiting Mr. Wesley's arrival; but, a considerable time having elapsed without any signs of his approach, a woman in the crowd, of the name of Wilson, mocked the patience of the expectant multitude by shouting, 'They are looking for their God, but he does not come!' She had no sooner uttered this sentence than she fell speechless to the ground, and died the following day."*

In this state of physical weakness Wesley prosecuted his journey, visiting the principal Methodist Stations in Scotland; and, having had a slender congregation at Glasgow on a Friday evening, he remarked in his "Journal,"

* Walker's "Methodism in Halifax," p. 181.

that it verified what he had often heard, "That the Scots dearly love the word of the Lord on the Lord's day," adding, "If I live to come again, I will take care to spend only the Lord's day at Glasgow." He returned by Newcastle, Walsingham, Weardale, Stanhope, Durham, Hartlepool, Stockton, Stokesley, Whitby, Malton, Scarborough, Beverley, Hull, Epworth, Lincoln, and Newton, preaching at these and other intermediate places, and reaching Bristol in time for the ensuing Conference.

As the peculiar and cruel persecution of the Methodists, by depriving them judicially of the benefit of the Toleration Act, was still continued, Wesley wrote the following letters,—the first to a member of Parliament, the second to one of the bishops.

"Last month a few people met together in Lincolnshire, to pray, and praise God, in a friend's house: there was no preaching at all. Two neighbouring justices fined the man of the house twenty pounds. I suppose he was not worth twenty shillings. Upon this, his household goods were distrained, and sold to pay the fine. He appealed to the quarter-sessions; but all the justices averred the Methodists could have no relief from the Act of Toleration, because they went to church; and that, so long as they did so, the Conventicle Act should be executed upon them.

"Last Sunday, when one of our preachers was beginning to speak to a quiet congregation, a neighbouring justice sent a constable to seize him, though he was licensed; and would not release him till he had paid twenty pounds; telling him his licence was good for nothing, because he was a Churchman.

"Now, Sir, what can the Methodists do? They are

liable to be ruined by the Conventicle Act, and they have no relief from the Act of Toleration! If this is not oppression, what is? Where, then, is English liberty? the liberty of Christians? yea, of every rational creature, who, as such, has a right to worship God according to his own conscience? But, waiving the question of right and wrong, what prudence is there in oppressing such a body of loyal subjects? If these good magistrates could drive them, not only out of Lincolnshire, but out of England, who would be gainers thereby? Not his majesty, whom we honour and love; not his ministers, whom we love and serve for his sake. Do they wish to throw away so many thousand friends, who are now bound to them by stronger ties than that of interest? If you will speak a word to Mr. Pitt on that head, you will oblige," &c.

"My Lord,

"It may seem strange, that one who is not acquainted with your lordship, should trouble you with a letter. But I am constrained to do it: I believe it is my duty both to God and your lordship. And I must speak plain; having nothing to hope or fear in this world, which I am on the point of leaving.

"The Methodists, in general, my lord, are members of the Church of England. They hold all her doctrines, attend her service, and partake of her sacraments. They do not willingly do harm to any one, but do what good they can to all. To encourage each other herein, they frequently spend an hour together in prayer and mutual exhortation. Permit me then to ask, *Cui bono?* 'For what reasonable end' would your lordship drive these people out of the Church? Are they not as quiet, as inoffensive, nay, as pious as any of their neighbours?

except, perhaps, here and there a hair-brained man, who knows not what he is about. Do you ask, 'Who drives them out of the Church?' Your lordship does; and that in the most cruel manner; yea, and the most disingenuous manner. They desire a licence to worship God after their own conscience. Your lordship refuses it, and then punishes them for not having a licence! So your lordship leaves them only this alternative, 'Leave the Church, or starve.' And is it a Christian, yea, a Protestant bishop, that so persecutes his own flock? I say, *persecutes;* for it is persecution to all intents and purposes. You do not burn them, indeed, but you starve them. And how small is the difference! And your lordship does this under colour of a vile, execrable law, not a whit better than that *De Hæretico comburendo.* So persecution, which is banished out of France, is again countenanced in England!

"O my lord, for God's sake, for Christ's sake, for pity's sake, suffer the poor people to enjoy their religious, as well as civil, liberty! I am on the brink of eternity! Perhaps so is your lordship too! How soon may you also be called to give an account of your stewardship to the great Shepherd and Bishop of souls! May He enable both you and me to do it with joy! So prays, my lord,

"Your Lordship's dutiful Son and Servant."

The Conference of 1790. State and extent of the Connexion.

The forty-seventh Conference was held at Bristol, and began July 27th, 1790. This was the last annual assembly of his preachers at which Wesley presided. The number of Circuits and Mission Stations now amounted to 119.

As the state of the Connexion at this Conference must be taken as its condition and extent at the death of Wesley, it may be desirable to be more than usually particular in the statement, and to go rather more into detail than

would otherwise be necessary. The following table presents a summary view of the number of preachers and members in the Methodist Societies at this Conference.

Countries.	Circuits.	Preachers.	Members.
England	65	195	52,832
Ireland	29	67	14,106
Wales	3	7	566
Scotland	8	18	1,086
Isle of Man	1	3	2,580
Norman Isles	2	4	498
West India Isles	7	13	4,500
British America	4	6	800
United States	97	198	43,265
	216	511	120,233

Proceedings of the Conference.

The work had now attained such magnitude and importance, as to demand in its several departments more careful oversight than any man of Wesley's age could supply, or than could be afforded by any annual inspection at the Conferences. This oversight it was wisely determined to provide by the appointment of Committees, as circumstances rendered them necessary. A Committee was appointed for the management of the West India Missions. It was composed of Dr. Thomas Coke, Alexander Mather, Thomas Rankin, James Rogers, Henry Moore, Adam Clarke, John Baxter, William Warrener, and Matthew Lumb.

A Building Committee for England was also appointed, consisting of Alexander Mather, John Pawson, Thomas Rankin, William Thompson, William Jenkins, and the London assistant.

A similar Committee was also appointed for Ireland,

of which Andrew Blair, Adam Clarke, Thomas Rutherford, and Thomas Michell were the members.

Judicious and successful ministry of George Lowe.

At this Conference, George Lowe was appointed to Blackburn, and his labours in this locality not only displayed great zeal and ability in the pulpit, but also showed that he was painfully alive to the progress of error, and diligent in counteracting its pernicious effects. He found the agents of Popery extremely active in the dissemination of their dogmas. They not only met the people who would attend their ministrations in public; but they also most diligently visited from house to house, denouncing the Methodist preachers as "wolves in sheep's clothing," and asserting that there was no validity in Christian ordinances as administered by them. By their zeal and earnestness they turned away some of the Methodist people from the truth, and cast a gloom over all their operations. Lowe, perhaps, had little ability for controversy; but he had certainly less taste for it. He did not, therefore, meet this evil by formal logical refutations of the errors which were circulated: but rather turned the battle to the gate, by equal diligence and energy in support of the truth. All his own people who were in danger he taught and warned; urging the great truths of the Gospel, and waiting upon God in constant prayer. He tracked the Jesuit teachers everywhere, and counteracted their efforts by at least equal diligence in pastoral visitation. He went beyond this, and visited Catholic families at their homes, and offered them a free salvation. His success in one of these cases merits special notice. A woman of the Roman Catholic persuasion, who lived about four miles from Blackburn, was brought into great distress about her soul. Having acknowledged at confession that she had committed some very aggravated sin, and endured the severe penance prescribed, she then

returned to the priest, hoping to obtain absolution. He, however, either not regarding her as sufficiently penitent, or finding her means too limited to purchase his benediction, not only refused absolution, but actually expressed a doubt whether her sin could be forgiven. This threw the poor creature into a hopeless state. She despaired of mercy, and said, "I deserve to go to hell, and am now willing to go to purgatory." Mr. Lowe, hearing of her case as he went to the village to hold a love-feast, called on her; and after some difficulty persuaded her to open her mind to him. He admitted that her sin was very great, but assured her that it was not committed against the priest, but against God; that it was the prerogative of God to forgive sin, and that He had absolutely promised to forgive "all manner of sin." He then explained to her the nature and object of the atonement of Christ, and the necessity of faith in that atonement. The poor woman was so far enlightened by these instructions, that, on Mr. Lowe's invitation, she accompanied him to the love-feast, where she was still farther instructed and comforted; and, although she did not profess to have obtained pardon, she unhesitatingly renounced Popery, embraced the Protestant faith, and had a prayer-meeting established in her house.*

Last days of Wesley.

Wesley was now drawing near the end of his course, and he appears to have felt a deep sense of his responsibility, and much anxiety, lest he should neglect or omit something necessary to be done, in regard to the vast range of agency and authority of which he was the legitimate and recognised centre. He frequently asked the Rev. Henry Moore, "Now, what ought I to do, in case I am to die this year? I do not see what I can do, but to go

* STRACHAN'S "Life and Times of George Lowe."

on in my labour as I have hitherto." He did so: in 1789 he visited Ireland, preaching and examining the Societies throughout that island. While in Dublin, he wrote in his Journal, "This day I enter on my eighty-seventh year. I now find I grow old. 1. My *sight* is decayed, so that I cannot read a small print, except in a strong light. 2. My *strength* is decayed, so that I walk much slower than I did some years since. 3. My *memory* of names, whether of persons or places, is decayed. I am obliged to stop a little to recollect them. What I should be afraid of is, (if I took thought for the morrow,) that my body should weigh down my mind, and create either *stubbornness*, by the decrease of my understanding, or *peevishness*, by the increase of bodily infirmities. But Thou shalt answer for me, O Lord my God!"

On the first day of 1790, his apprehensions of increasing decay were so far realized, that he wrote in his "Journal," "I am now an old man, decayed from head to foot. My eyes are dim; my right hand shakes much; my mouth is hot and dry every morning; I have a lingering fever almost every day; my motion is weak and slow. However, blessed be God, I do not slack my labour. I can preach and write still." Yet, at the very time that he thus expressed himself, the Rev. Henry Moore, who was in the same house with him, says, "I was greatly surprised. I knew it must be as he said; but I could not imagine his weakness was so great. He still rose at his usual hour, four o'clock, and went through the many duties of the day; not, indeed, with the same apparent vigour, but without complaint, and with a degree of resolution that was astonishing." In this state of body and mind he prosecuted his labours with untiring devotedness. The winter, indeed,

had not passed away, before he contemplated a renewal of his usual travels. He had actually sent his carriage and horses before him to Bristol, and taken places for himself and friend in the Bath coach, when, on Thursday, the 17th of February, 1791, he preached at Lambeth in the evening. But he was obliged to stop once or twice while speaking, in consequence of a severe cold. On the following day he read and wrote as usual, and preached at Chelsea in the evening, when he was again obliged to stop once or twice in his discourse on account of his cold. On Saturday, he was occupied most of the day in reading and writing, and rose early on the Sabbath morning, as if to pursue his usual course of labour; but he was utterly unfit for any exercise. At seven o'clock he was obliged to lie down, and slept between three and four hours. In the afternoon he lay down again, but came down in the evening to supper. On Monday, he seemed much better, and, having engaged to do so some time before, he went to Twickenham to dine, and, when he returned home, seemed much improved. On Tuesday, he went to Leatherhead, and preached to a small congregation on, "Seek ye the Lord, while He may be found: call ye upon Him while He is near." And with that discourse the preaching of Wesley terminated. He remained cheerful and nearly as well as usual until Friday morning, when he became very heavy, and lay down most of the day. On Saturday he continued in the same state, and dozed much throughout the day. On Sunday morning, there being no appearance of improvement, but rather a gradual sinking, his attendants became alarmed, and the Rev. Joseph Bradford wrote to some select friends, imploring their prayers in this solemn season. One of these notes was sent to the Rev. John Hickling, and was in these terms:—

"City Road, London,
"*February 27th*, 1791.

"Dear Brother,

"Mr. Wesley is very ill; pray, pray, pray. I am,

"Your affectionate Brother,

"Joseph Bradford."

"*Mr. Hickling.*"

His death.

The closing scene of this great and good man's life shall be given in the words of his friend and biographer, the Rev. Henry Moore.

"On Sunday morning, he got up, took a cup of tea, and seemed better. While sitting in his chair, he looked quite cheerful, and repeated the latter part of that verse in the Scripture Hymns, 'Forsake me not, when my strength faileth:'

'Till glad I lay this body down,
Thy servant, Lord, attend;
And O! my life of mercy crown
With a triumphant end.'

"Soon after, in a most emphatical manner, he said, 'Our friend Lazarus sleepeth.' Some who were then present speaking rather too much to him, he tried to exert himself, but was soon exhausted, and obliged to lie down. After a while, he looked up, and said, 'Speak to me; I cannot speak.' On which one of the company said, 'Shall we pray with you, Sir?' He earnestly replied, 'Yes.' And while they prayed, his whole soul seemed engaged with God for an answer, and he uttered a hearty 'Amen.'

"About half after two, he said, 'There is no need for more than what I said at Bristol. My words then were,—

'I the chief of sinners am,
But Jesus died for me.'*

* On this passage, Dr. Adam Clarke wrote the following note, in the margin of a copy of Coke and Moore's "Life of Wesley:"—"He spoke the

REV.ᴰ JOSEPH SUTCLIFFE, A.M.

[illegible] by W. POOLE. Engraved by W.T. FRY

[illegible] Wesleyan Book Committee, 14 City Road

"One said, 'Is this the present language of your heart, and do you now feel as you then did?' He replied, 'Yes.' When the same person repeated,—

'Bold I approach the' eternal throne,
And claim the crown through Christ my own,'—

and added, ''T is enough. He, our precious Immanuel, has purchased, has promised all;' he earnestly replied, 'He is all! He is all!' and then said, 'I will go.' Soon after, to his niece, Miss Wesley, who sat by his bedside, he said, 'Sally, have you zeal for God now?' After this the fever was very high, and at times affected his head. But even then, though his head was subject to a temporary derangement, his heart seemed wholly engaged in his Master's work.

"In the evening, he got up again, and, while sitting in his chair, he said, 'How necessary is it for every one to be on the right foundation!

'I the chief of sinners am,
But Jesus died for me.'

We must be justified by faith, and then go on to full sanctification.'

"He slept most of the following day, and spoke but little; yet that little testified how much his whole heart was taken up in the care of the Churches, the glory of God, and the things pertaining to that kingdom to which he was hastening. Once, in a low but very distinct voice, he said, 'There is no way into the holiest, but by the blood of Jesus.'

same words to me in his study at Bristol, August, 1790. He was very weak and poorly at the time, and seemed to have eternal things impressed on his soul in the most solemn manner. I never heard a man express more ample self-renunciation and stronger dependence on the sacrifice and merit of the Lord Jesus. This was about six months before his death."

"He afterward inquired what the words were on which he preached at Hampstead a short time before. He was told, they were these:—'Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that ye through His poverty might be rich.' He replied, 'That is the foundation, the only foundation: there is no other.' He also repeated three or four times in the space of a few hours, 'We have boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus.'

"Tuesday, March 1st.—After a very restless night, (though, when asked whether he was in pain, he generally answered, 'No,' and never complained through his whole illness, except once, when he felt pain in his left breast, when he drew his breath,) he began singing,—

'All glory to God in the sky,
And peace upon earth be restored!
O Jesus, exalted on high,
Appear our omnipotent Lord!
Who, meanly in Bethlehem born,
Didst stoop to redeem a lost race,
Once more to Thy creatures return,
And reign in Thy kingdom of grace!'

"Here his strength failed. But after lying still a while, he called for a pen and ink: they were brought to him; but those active fingers which had been the blessed instruments of conveying spiritual consolation and useful instruction to thousands, could no longer perform their office. Some time after, he said, 'I want to write.' But on the pen's being put into his hand, and the paper held before him, he said, 'I cannot.' One of the company answered, 'Let me write for you, Sir; tell me what you would say.' 'Nothing,' replied he, 'but, that GOD IS WITH US.' In the forenoon he said, 'I will get up.' While they were

bringing his clothes, he broke out in a manner which, considering his extreme weakness, astonished all present, in these words,—

'I 'll praise my Maker while I 've breath;
And when my voice is lost in death,
Praise shall employ my nobler powers;
My days of praise shall ne'er be past,
While life, and thought, and being last,
Or immortality endures.'

"Another time, he was feebly endeavouring to speak, beginning, 'Nature is—Nature is.' One that was present added, 'Nearly exhausted; but you are entering into a new nature, and into the society of blessed spirits.' He answered, 'Certainly;' and clasped his hands together, saying, 'Jesus!' The rest could not be well heard, but his lips continued moving as in fervent prayer.

"When he got into his chair, he appeared to change for death: but, regardless of his dying frame, he said, with a weak voice, 'Lord, Thou givest strength to those that can speak, and to those that cannot. Speak, Lord, to all our hearts, and let them know Thou loosest the tongue.' He then sung,—

'To Father, Son, and Holy Ghost,
Who sweetly all agree,'—

Here his voice failed him, and, after gasping for breath, he said, 'Now we have done,—let us all go.' He was then laid on the bed, from which he rose no more. After lying still, and sleeping a little, he desired those who were present to pray and praise. They knelt down, and the room seemed to be filled with the divine presence. A little after he said, 'Let me be buried in nothing but woollen, and let my corpse be carried in my coffin into the chapel.' Then, as if done with all below, he again begged they would pray

and praise. Several friends that were in the house being called up, they all kneeled down to prayer, at which time his fervour of spirit was visible to every one present. But in particular parts of the prayer, his whole soul seemed to be engaged in a manner which evidently showed how ardently he longed for the full accomplishment of their united desires. And when Mr. Broadbent, who did not long survive him, was praying in a very expressive manner, that if God was about to take away their father to his eternal rest, He would be pleased to continue and increase His blessing upon the doctrine and discipline which He had long made His aged servant the means of propagating and establishing in the world; such a degree of fervour accompanied his loud 'Amen' as was every way expressive of his soul's being engaged in the answer of the petitions.

"On rising from their knees, he took hold of all their hands, and with the utmost placidness saluted them, and said, 'Farewell, farewell.'

"A little after, a person coming in, he strove to speak, but could not. Finding they could not understand him, he paused a little, and, with all the remaining strength he had, cried out, 'THE BEST OF ALL IS, GOD IS WITH US;' and then, lifting up his dying arm in token of victory, and raising his feeble voice with a holy triumph not to be expressed, he again repeated the heart-reviving words,—'THE BEST OF ALL IS, GOD IS WITH US.'

"Seeing some persons standing by his bed-side, he asked, 'Who are these?' and being informed who they were, Mr. Rogers said, 'Sir, we are come to rejoice with you; you are going to receive your crown.' 'It is the Lord's doing,' he replied, 'and marvellous in our eyes.' On being told that his sister-in-law, Mrs. Wesley, was come,

he said, 'He giveth His servants rest.' He thanked her, as she pressed his hand, and affectionately endeavoured to kiss her. On wetting his lips, he said, 'We thank Thee, O Lord, for these and all Thy mercies: bless the Church and King; and grant us truth and peace, through Jesus Christ our Lord, for ever and ever.'

"At another time he said, 'He causeth His servants to lie down in peace.' Then pausing a little, he cried, 'The clouds drop fatness:' and soon after, 'The Lord is with us, the God of Jacob is our refuge!' He then called those present to prayer: and though he was greatly exhausted, he appeared still more fervent in spirit. These exertions were, however, too much for his feeble frame; and most of the night following, though he often attempted to repeat the Psalm before mentioned, he could only utter,—

'I'll praise,—I'll praise.'

"On Wednesday morning the closing scene drew near. Mr. Bradford, his faithful friend, prayed with him, and the last word he was heard to articulate was, 'Farewell.' A few minutes before ten, while several of his friends were kneeling around his bed, without a lingering groan, this man of God, this beloved pastor of thousands, entered into the joy of his Lord.

"At the desire of many friends, his corpse was placed in the New Chapel, and remained there the day before his interment. His face during that time had the trace of a heavenly smile upon it, and a beauty which was admired by all that saw it. The crowds which came to see him, while he lay in his coffin, were so great, that his friends, apprehensive of a tumult if he was interred at the usual time, determined to bury him, contrary to their first resolution, between five and six in the morning, of which no notice was

given till late the preceding evening: notwithstanding which, the intelligence had so far transpired, that some hundreds attended at that early hour. These, with many tears, saw his dear remains deposited in the vault, which he had some years before prepared for himself, and for those itinerant preachers who should die in London. From those whom he loved in life, he chose not to be divided in death.

"The funeral service was read by the Rev. Mr. Richardson, who had served him as a son in the Gospel for nearly thirty years, and who now lies with him in the same vault. When Mr. Richardson came to that part of the service, 'Forasmuch as it hath pleased Almighty God to take unto Himself the soul of our dear brother,' &c., he substituted, with the most tender emphasis, the epithet 'father' instead of 'brother;' which had so powerful an effect on the congregation, that, from silent tears, they seemed universally to burst out into loud weeping.

"The inscription on the coffin was,—

'JOHANNES WESLEY, A.M.
OLIM SOC. COLL. LIN. OXON.
OB. 2DO DIE MARTII, 1791,
AN. ÆT. 88.'" *

It might not unreasonably have been expected, whatever opposition such a man might have encountered in life, that after death he would cease to be followed by falsehood and ridicule. But no; Mr. Hampson declared that when placed in his coffin, "he had a Bible in one hand, a white handkerchief in the other, and the old clerical cap on his head;" and Dr. Southey copied the ridiculous statement into his "Life of Wesley." The laureate, doubtless,

* REV. H. MOORE'S "Life of Wesley," vol. ii., pp. 388–394.

believed it. But the Rev. Henry Moore, in his last edition of the "Life of Wesley," (1825,) put forth the following contradiction of this libel: "As I was an eye-witness, I may state that there is no truth at all in this account. He had no clerical cap, old or new, in his possession: and his friends had too much sense to put any thing into the hands of a corpse." Yet the Rev. C. C. Southey, when he published the third edition of his father's "Life of Wesley," in 1846, lest that work, in many respects truly valuable, should cease to be disfigured by one of the many errors with which the mistakes of its author had at first charged it, faithfully copies the false statement, which had been so fully, and on unquestionable authority, contradicted twenty years before.

It is, however, pleasing to find that those who greatly differed from Wesley in opinion, and were witnesses of his life, and labours, and death, had sufficient candour to do justice to his character and memory. The following is a verbatim extract from Jackson's "Oxford Journal," Saturday, March 5th, 1791:—

"YESTERDAY morning died at his own house, in the City Road, in the eighty-eighth year of his age, that well-known and celebrated minister, the Rev. John Wesley; whose eminent abilities, in every branch of polite and sacred literature, not only rendered him the ornament of his own age and country, but will also endear his name to the latest posterity.

"This extraordinary man was born in the year 1703, at Epworth, a village in Lincolnshire; of which place his father, Samuel Wesley, was rector.

"At a proper age, John was sent to Christ Church College, Oxford. About 1725, he was elected fellow of

Lincoln College. In 1729, he joined a Society of fellow students in private devotion, and from this time his spiritual career may be dated.

"In 1735, he embarked for Georgia, in order to convert the Indians, but returned to England in 1737; where Mr. Whitefield had commenced the work of reformation.

"In 1738, he visited Count Zinzendorf at Herrnhut, in Germany, the chief of the Moravians. We find him in England again in the following year; and on April 2nd he preached his first field sermon at Bristol, from which time his disciples have continued to increase. He remained the rest of his days in this kingdom, travelling through every part of it, and establishing congregations in England, Scotland, and Ireland.

"In 1750, he married a lady from whom he afterwards parted, and she died in 1781. By her he had no children. Of his writings it is impossible for us to speak. Few men have written so voluminously. Divinity, devotional and controversial, history, philosophy, medicine, politics, poetry, &c., &c., all were, at different times, the subjects of his pen. His history, if well written, would certainly be important; for in every respect, as the founder of the most numerous sect in the kingdom, as a man, and as a writer, he must be considered as one of the most extraordinary characters any age ever produced."

The following inscription is placed on Wesley's tomb in the City Road burial-ground:—

To the Memory of
The Venerable John Wesley, A.M.,
Late Fellow of Lincoln College, Oxford.
This Great Light arose
(by the singular Providence of God)
to enlighten These Nations,
and to revive, enforce, and defend
the Pure Apostolical Doctrines and Practices of the
Primitive Church;
which he continued to do, by his Writings and his Labours,
for more than Half a Century:
and, to his inexpressible Joy,
not only beheld their Influence extending,
and their Efficacy witnessed,
in the Hearts and Lives of Many Thousands,
as well in the Western World, as in These Kingdoms:
but also, far above all human Power or Expectation, Lived to
see Provision made, by the singular Grace of God,
for their Continuance and Establishment,
to the Joy of Future Generations!
Reader, if thou art constrained to bless the Instrument,
give God the Glory!
After having languished a few Days, He, at length, finished
his Course
and his Life together;
gloriously triumphing over Death,
March 2, An. Dom. 1791,
in the Eighty-Eighth Year of his Age.

BOOK III.

WESLEY AND THE METHODISM OF HIS TIMES.

CHAPTER I.

THE RELIGIOUS CHARACTER OF WESLEY.

Importance of obtaining a just view of Wesley's religious character.

In the preceding chapters we have endeavoured to set forth, in as clear and consecutive order as the nature of the subject will allow, and as fully as our limits permit, the facts connected with the origin and progress of Methodism till the death of Wesley. It now becomes necessary that we educe from these materials a just view of the religious character of the agency, operations, and results, which have passed under our notice.

In attempting to form this estimate, our first inquiry must be directed to the founder of the whole system. "Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?" If Wesley himself was designing and corrupt, if he was influenced by selfish views and ambitious motives, it can scarcely be supposed that the result of his labours would be eminently religious, or deserve to be regarded as a great work, crowned with the blessing of God for the good of mankind.

The fruits of Wesley's labours.

Yet, we are bound to say, from a careful review of the facts which have been detailed, that such a work it undoubtedly was. Two studious and devout young men of the University of Oxford gather around them a few others like-minded with themselves; and this little company devote their efforts, in the most praiseworthy manner, to

religious and charitable duties. Afterward, John and Charles Wesley, impelled by a desire to preach the Gospel of Christ to the heathen, go on a mission to America. Strange as it may seem, this mission produced in the mind of Wesley a deep conviction that he had not yet obtained the salvation from the guilt and power of sin so freely and fully offered in the Gospel of Christ. This conviction led to an intimate acquaintance with Peter Böhler and other Moravians, who instructed him more perfectly in the great doctrine of justification by faith. Having obtained this salvation, they began to preach it, as the "glorious Gospel." At first, this was done in the churches; but, when these were closed against them, they went forth into the highways and hedges, calling sinners to repentance. Their word was so richly followed by the divine blessing, that multitudes were brought to repentance and the enjoyment of salvation. A short time sufficed to show that some of these converts also were called and qualified by God to preach Christ; and although at first Wesley felt an invincible repugnance to the act, yet, having ample evidence that this was of God, he allowed them to exercise their gifts, and directed their operations.

These results clearly indicate his sterling piety.

Thus Methodism arose into being and power. Sinners were awakened to a sense of their danger through sin, converted to God, and built up into a Christian brotherhood. Reprobates were reclaimed, drunkards made sober, the godless and brutal so changed, that they brought forth fruits of righteousness; whilst all united to testify that they had, by the great mercy of God, been "delivered from the power of darkness, and translated into the kingdom of God's dear Son." This evidence, in any ordinary case, would be regarded as amply sufficient to prove, that the laborious and self-denying agent in producing these grand

results was a good man, specially raised up to bring about a great work of God.

Nor would it, perhaps, be regarded as offering any serious opposition to this conclusion, that Wesley was violently opposed and persecuted throughout nearly the whole of his active career. His earnest and persevering aggression on the wickedness of the world and the formalism of the Church, his invasion of ecclesiastical order by preaching abroad and in unconsecrated buildings, the employment of lay preachers, and the holding of separate religious services, might serve to account for the manifestation of violent opposition to him, without involving any imputation on the reality of his personal religion, or the scriptural purity of the work in which he was engaged. If, therefore, we were to judge of the case before us by ordinary rules, we should regard the piety of Wesley, and the evangelical character of his work, as being so patent to the world, as to render it unnecessary to offer a word in their support.

Wesley's religious reputation impugned.

The character of Wesley has not been allowed to stand thus before the world. Since the founder of Methodism has passed away from the society of earth, and the din of controversy and persecution which his efforts excited was hushed into silence, men of learning and commanding literary reputation, avowing themselves the friends of enlightened Christianity, and professing to investigate the subject in the most candid manner, under the guidance of high scriptural and philosophical principles, have in various elaborate works brought the religious character of Wesley and the fruits of his labours before the world, with many and important ascriptions of greatness and praise, but, at the same time, with such serious and numerous allegations of inconsistency and defect, as fully to place him on trial

before the religious public of the present age. We freely accept the consideration of the subject in this aspect; and, in doing so, our attention will be exclusively directed to the strictures of Dr. Southey and Mr. Isaac Taylor, the two master spirits who have dealt with Wesley and Methodism in our own times.

His conversion a key to the character of his life.

In considering the religious character of Wesley, there is one fact which, like a chief corner-stone, lies at the foundation of it, and which must, in the first place, have our careful attention. We allude to what Wesley called, and to what we call, "his conversion." This, as an incident in his personal history, has been already noticed; it is now referred to as giving a ruling element to his religious character.

It is fully admitted that long before he was the subject of this change he was sincerely devoted to the service of God, zealous to do His will and to promote His glory. And though it has also been admitted, that the term "conversion" is not, in its strict scriptural meaning, limited to the attainment of the pardoning mercy and renewing grace of God; yet, as the obtaining of this salvation constituted the turning-point of his character, and formed his principle of action throughout all his future life, and as his friends and enemies have all referred to this change under this name, it has been retained. What we especially insist on, however, is the fact, that, notwithstanding all his previous pious exercises and zealous labours, he did, up to this period of his life, mourn under a sense of the divine displeasure. His own words are, "All my works, my righteousness, my prayers, need an atonement for themselves. So that my mouth is stopped. I have nothing to plead. God is holy: I am unholy.

God is a consuming fire: I am altogether a sinner, meet to be consumed." In this state of condemnation he remained until the evening of the ever-memorable 24th of May, 1738; when, while hearing one read Luther's Preface to the Epistle to the Romans, he says, "While he was describing the change which God works in the heart through faith in Christ, I felt my heart strangely warmed. I felt I did trust in Christ alone for salvation; and an assurance was given me, that He had taken away my sins, even mine, and saved me from the 'law of sin and death.'" *

The objection of Isaac Taylor.

What objection, then, is made to this account of Wesley's conversion? Is it argued that God no longer "pardoneth and absolveth them that truly repent, and unfeignedly believe His holy Gospel?" that believers in Christ can no longer say, "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God?" This is not plainly said; but it is urged by his latest censor, that "we must reject his condemnation of himself as not 'a regenerate man,' at this period; for if not, then many of those whose names adorn Church history, during a full thousand years, were not Christians!" It will not be necessary to spend much time over this objection. Wesley, from a prayerful and diligent study of the Scriptures, regarded himself as being in a state of spiritual darkness and bondage; and held that he was then "born again," "renewed in the spirit of his mind," and brought into "the glorious liberty of the children of God." And fifty years of subsequent godly experience confirmed him in this judgment.

Are we to receive this testimony, or to set it aside, lest it should reflect on the religious character of "many of

* Wesley's "Journal."

those whose names adorn Church history during a full thousand years?" It may, indeed, unhappily be too true, that with respect to some of these who are now celebrated as ornaments of the Church in ancient times, the language of the Saviour was verified: "Many will say to Me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Thy name? and in Thy name have cast out devils? and in Thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you." Although this is possible, we would rather entertain the charitable hope, that many, if not most, of those men were the subjects of the new birth unto righteousness, and lived in the experience of spiritual life, although the proofs of its existence and operation have not been preserved in our ecclesiastical annals. But for the prominent position occupied by his sons, who would have known that Samuel Wesley of Epworth lived and died supported by the consolations and power of "the inward witness," which he regarded as "the proof, the strongest proof, of Christianity?" However this may be, Mr. Taylor must excuse us, when we pronounce his objection to be puerile and worthless. If he would impugn the reality of John Wesley's regeneration and justification, he must do it, not by alleging that the persons "whose names adorn Church history during a full thousand years" did not profess such attainments; but by showing that the language and conduct of Wesley respecting these blessings are contrary to the order and promises of God, and the experience of apostles and primitive Christians, as recorded in the New Testament. And this, he well knows, cannot be done.

Southey on the same subject.

It is more difficult to deal with Southey's remarks on Wesley's conversion. It cannot be said that he has avoided a full investigation of the subject: he has allowed

ample space for its consideration. But his discussion of it, throughout, is evidently the labouring effort of an able and practised writer grappling with a subject far above his religious comprehension. We consequently find a most grave religious question discussed with an utter absence of serious feeling, and with uniform flippancy of language. The reader scarcely knows whether the writer is aiming covert sarcasm at the subject of his biography, or making an insidious attack on the vital doctrines of the Gospel; and at length he rises from the perusal with the question of Richard Watson on his lips: "Is Mr. Southey a believer in Christianity?" We have no doubt that at the time of his writing the "Life of Wesley" he was a sincere believer; but we think it equally evident that, in speaking of Wesley's personal piety, he had to deal with a subject too profoundly spiritual for his attainments either in philosophy or religion.

Southey's solution of the doctrine of assurance, as he calls it, both as it respected Wesley and his followers, was, that their profession of spiritual religion, and especially of a direct witness of their acceptance, was the result of "disease." We beg the reader's attention to the following remarks on such offensive allegations, when applied to Christian men, whatever their peculiarity of profession or opinion; the more especially as they come from the pen of an able popular writer, who will not be suspected of partiality either for Wesley or Methodism. "Would it not have been better to have examined patiently, charitably, and philosophically what they really were, and what they really were not? By so doing, I believe, men would have found in these mystics and saints, after all bodily illusions, all nervous fantasies, all pardonable 'confusions between the object and subject,' had been eliminated, there still remained, in

each and every one of them, and not to be explained away by any theory of diseased body or mind, one of the very loveliest and noblest of human characters; and on that discovery the question must have followed, Was that, too, the product of disease? And to that there can be, I trust, but one answer from the many. If here and there a man shall be found daring enough to assert that the most exquisite developments of humanity are founded on a lie; that its seemingly loveliest flowers are but fungi bred of corruption; then the general heart of mankind will give their cynicism the lie, and answer, 'Not so! this is too beautiful and too righteous to have been born of aught but God.'

"And when they found these persons, whatsoever might be their 'denomination,' all inclined to claim some illumination, intuition, or direct vision of eternal truth, eternal good, eternal beauty, even of that Eternal Father in whom all live, move, and have their being; yet making that claim in deepest humility, amid confessions of their own weakness, sinfulness, nothingness, which to the self-satisfied may seem exaggerated and all but insincere; they would have been, perhaps, more philosophical, as well as more charitable, more in accordance with Baconian induction, as well as with St. Paul's direct assertions in his Epistles to the Corinthians, if they had said, 'The testimony of so many isolated persons to this fact is, on the whole, a fair probability for its truth; and we are inclined to believe it, though it transcends our experience, on the same ground that we believe the united testimony of travellers to a hundred natural wonders, which differ as utterly from anything which we ever saw, as do these spiritual wonders from anything which we have ever felt.'

"As for the impossibility of such a direct assurance, it is

an assertion too silly to be seriously answered in the nineteenth century, which is revealing weekly wonders in the natural world, which would have seemed impossible to our fathers. Shall the natural world at every step transcend our boldest dreams; and shall the spiritual world be limited by us to the merest common-places of every-day experience, especially when these common-places are yet utterly unexplained and miraculous? When will men open their eyes to the plain axiom, that nothing is impossible with God, save that He should transgress His own nature by being unjust and unloving?" * There appears to be no reason, then, why we should hesitate to receive the testimony of Wesley, or of the Methodists generally, respecting this very important doctrine.

Wesley conversion truly scriptural. His pious conduct.

We are therefore led to the conclusion, that the conversion of John Wesley was a change of heart from nature to grace, eminently scriptural in its character and results, and adapted to prepare him for that course of active usefulness which he so successfully pursued. To the end of his days he maintained a pure and godly character, and displayed eminent Christian virtues. Where shall we search in the history of contemporary men for such a life of devoted, self-denying labours in the Master's service? Let his incessant travelling, his constant preaching, the vast number of his literary productions, his attention to the mental and spiritual improvement of his preachers, his constant paternal care over the Societies, and his almost uninterrupted vigilance in repelling the attacks of assailants by polemical efforts,—let all these be fairly and candidly recognised, and his equal in pious labours certainly cannot be found in his own times. It is of course evident, that

* Rev. Charles Kingsley's Preface to Dr. John Tauler's Life and Sermons, pp. xxxi., xxxii., xxxv.

none of these separately, nor, indeed, all combined, afford in themselves any positive proof of personal piety. Yet it is equally manifest, that in Wesley's case they were all so avowedly and clearly disinterested, and united with so much self-sacrifice and singleness of mind, as scarcely to leave any other hypothesis of their origin and principle admissible.

Such a course against opposition, censure, and suffering must be influenced and sustained by an adequate motive. And it is only reasonable to weigh, with justice and charity, the motives which an individual himself assigns for his conduct. Let Wesley have the advantage of displaying his principles of action, and he will stand before us as one of the most eminently godly and devoted men of any age or nation.

It is difficult to find a man who laboured more diligently or for a longer period, or who suffered more in the prosecution of his labours. For what, then, did he endure the toil and suffering of a long life? His own simple and conclusive answer would be, "For the glory of God, and the salvation of men." And, having carefully scrutinized his life and labours, from his conversion to his death, we find nothing contrary to this assertion. We have no desire to deny his frailties and errors, in common with other men. Yet in no instance are these found leading him into immoral or irreligious conduct. Throughout his whole course, although frequently placed in circumstances of great trial and perplexity, he by the grace of God maintained the uniformly Christian character.

Southey's further allegations against Wesley repelled.

Having candidly stated the honest conviction which a careful review of his life has made in our mind, it is but just to say that others have come to a different conclusion. Dr. Southey thought he saw, in Wesley's conduct and

bearing, evidence of spiritual pride, and asserts that "the love of power was the ruling passion in his mind;" * that "no conqueror or poet was ever more ambitious;" † and consequently that he exacted obedience "from his own followers as rigidly as the founder of a monastic order." ‡

These are very serious allegations, and would destroy the religious character of any man against whom they might be substantiated. We will therefore give a brief notice to each of these charges. Dr. Southey declares that the love of power was the ruling passion of Wesley's mind, because he retained the government of the Societies in his own hands, and, as he says, "legislated for the sect which he raised." But is this a sufficient proof of so serious a crimination? Is there no other solution of the difficulty,—no other way of accounting for the fact, that Wesley retained the government of the Societies, than by ascribing to a minister, who on every other ground was entitled to a high Christian character, the odious vice of being swayed by the love of power as a ruling passion? In common justice, Southey should have instituted this inquiry. Now, supposing that Wesley disliked the possession of this power as much as any of his censors, when should he have resigned it into the hands of the preachers and people? In the early stages of his career? The idea is absurd. While he had to organize and bring into harmonious operation the various and, in many respects, discordant materials of which his Societies were composed, his resignation of the governing power would be equivalent to an abandonment of the work. And every candid observer of Methodist history during the life of Wesley must be aware,

* SOUTHEY'S "Life of Wesley. Third Edition. Edited by the REV. C. CUTHBERT SOUTHEY," vol. ii., p. 98.

† *Ibid.*, p. 186.

‡ *Ibid.*, p. 103.

that if he had even in the latter part of his life transferred all his power to the preachers, or to them and the people conjointly, as it is certain he did to a very great degree, there is every reason to believe that it would have produced a division of the Societies, or have led them headlong into separation from the Church of England, and probably into direct antagonism to its institutions.

Nothing, indeed, but the prudent conduct and wise measures of Wesley, during his long life, saved the Methodist Societies from the prevalence of the principles of Dissent, and placed them in the happy and honourable *via media* which they now occupy. There can be no doubt that he was well aware of this; and therefore, whilst he retained the legal power of governing, he declares, "The power I have I never sought: it was the undesired, unexpected result of the work God was pleased to work by me. I have a thousand times sought to devolve it on others; but as yet I cannot: I therefore suffer it, till I can find any one to ease me of my burden." The circumstances we have mentioned, and probably many others, prevented him doing this fully during his life. Dr. Southey, with this statement and the facts of the case before him, had no warrant for asserting that he "deceived himself," and that "the love of power was the ruling passion of his mind." The assertion is equally an outrage on charity and justice.

The charge that "no conqueror or poet was ever more ambitious" rests on similar grounds, and might be dismissed without another word, but for the strange compliment it unintentionally pays to Wesley and his work. When we are told that Wesley was ambitious, we instinctively inquire, What was the object of his ambition? It is certain it was not wealth. No! we are told it was power and distinction that he lusted for. This passion is

usually most powerful in early life. Men have generally attained their highest grandeur and honour about middle age. How did Wesley conduct himself at this time of life? He was a young man of great promise, placed in a sphere where he had ample opportunities for the encouragement of lofty aspirations; yet he was then manifestly insensible to all these motives. John Wesley at Oxford was no place-hunter. He did not flatter the great, or fawn to the powerful, or make any effort to grasp those means of advancement which lay within his reach. Until the age of thirty-five he was either a pains-taking student, a diligent college tutor, or a laborious and self-denying Christian minister. No man could then charge him with ambition. Nor was it until he was made a happy partaker of pardoning mercy, and enabled to rejoice in a sense of the divine favour, that any attempt was made to fix on him this foul stigma. And then, where was the pretext? In his going out into the highways and hedges, and preaching Christ to those who were as sheep without a shepherd; in his raising up, from the wildest and worst inhabitants of the land, trophies of the glorious grace of God; or in his nurturing and training these converted reprobates for Christ and for heaven. Would to God that such ambition now fired the hearts of thousands of ministers, both within and without the Establishment!

Groundless as the charge is, it nevertheless conveys an unintentional compliment on Wesley's success. After Dr. Southey had shown errors in the doctrine and practice of the Methodists; after he had dwelt on the enthusiasm and extravagance which rioted throughout these Societies, and described Methodism as a lazar-house where "disease" uniformly prevailed, except in the case of George Story; what did he by this charge admit? That the work of

Wesley was, after all, a result of which a man might be proud! that the government of the Societies founded and reared up by him, as an instrument in the hand of God, was an acquisition which might excite the ambition of an intelligent and enlightened man! In reply to the censure, that he exacted a rigid obedience from his followers, it has been well said, "No man was ever more obediently served, but it was because no man was ever more loved, and because the confidence in his uprightness was unbounded."

It is only just to the character of Wesley to reply thus far to these slanderous aspersions which the work of Dr. Southey still casts upon him. It is, however, but equal justice to the assailant and the assailed, to say that the Doctor certainly ought not now to be held to the full extent responsible for the perpetuation of these charges. There was a strong impression before Dr. Southey's death, that his views respecting the character of Wesley had been greatly modified, and that he had made preparations for correcting them in a forthcoming edition of the work. When, however, a third edition of the book was published under the editorial care of his son, the Rev. Charles Cuthbert Southey, these expectations were disappointed. All the offensive passages were reproduced without alteration. And, as if to repudiate all idea of the author having changed his views, we find the following passage in the editor's preface. After alluding to the notes of Coleridge and the remarks of Alexander Knox, which were now first added to the work, it is said, "Somewhat widely, indeed, do they on many points differ in their estimate; and possibly the reader may be inclined to think the author's judgment of Mr. Wesley, on the whole, the most just and most impartial one:"*— words which undoubtedly convey the idea that the senti-

Dr. Southey, before his death, altered his views of Wesley's ruling motives.

* SOUTHEY'S "Life of Wesley," Third Edition, vol. i., preface, p. viii.

ments in the body of the work fairly represented the final judgment of Southey, and that this was decidedly at variance with those of Coleridge and of Knox.

With mingled feelings of gratification and pain, we proceed to show that this obvious sense of the passage is contrary to fact.

Proofs of this change, and of his purpose to withdraw the charges.

Some years since, a highly valued friend, (the late Joseph Carne, Esq., F.R.S., &c., of Penzance,) who met Dr. Southey when he was in Cornwall, and who subsequently visited him at Keswick, related to the author of this work a conversation which he had with the Doctor on the subject of his "Life of Wesley," in the course of which the latter declared his intention of making the *amende honorable*, in the third edition of his work, for his misconception of Mr. Wesley's character. Mr. Carne, who entertained a high respect for Dr. Southey's literary character, and no less for his candour, kindly furnished to the author the following particulars of the conversation, which, with equal kindness, he allowed him to publish. These are reproduced here precisely as they were first printed, with the entire approval of Mr. Carne.

"Dr. Southey visited Cornwall in December, 1836, when I first had the gratification of being introduced to him, and of accompanying him to some of the interesting objects in this place and neighbourhood. In walking through the Chapel Street in this town, we passed a large place of worship, and, on my informing him, in answer to his inquiry, that it was the Wesleyan chapel, (I believe he knew I was a Wesleyan,) he observed, 'The Wesleyans, I believe, are very numerous in Cornwall.' I merely answered in the affirmative, and he continued, 'I am about to publish a new edition of my Life of Wesley. Some time after the first edition was published, I met with two

copies, in which the persons to whom they belonged had written their remarks. One of these persons was Coleridge, the other was Henry Moore,—two very dissimilar characters,' said he, smiling; 'and I have made some use of the remarks of both. I had also,' he added, 'a long correspondence with Alexander Knox, (of Dublin,) who laboured strongly to convince me that I had formed a wrong estimate of Mr. Wesley's character in supposing him to have been actuated by ambitious motives; and I now believe,' said he, 'that he was right, and in my new edition I shall acknowledge it.'

"In mentioning this circumstance, I do not pretend to be certain of every word; but of the substance and sense of the whole I am quite certain."

Of the strict accuracy of Mr. Carne's statement no reasonable doubt can be entertained. We accordingly regarded it as perfectly decisive, on the point under consideration, from the first moment of hearing it. But we did doubt whether, with the conduct and language of Dr. Southey's son intervening, we should be able to make the fact of the Doctor's change of opinion so apparent to the minds of our readers as it was to our own. We felt, moreover, how easy it would be for the friends of Dr. Southey to suggest the possibility of unconscious mistake, especially in a casual and rapid conversation.

In this difficulty, two autograph letters of Dr. Southey accidentally fell into our hands, confirmatory, not only of our preconceived judgment of his character, but also, and in the most conclusive manner, of Mr. Carne's statement.

One of these letters is dated "Keswick, November 24th, 1835," and is addressed to "James Nichols, Esq., 46, Hoxton Square;" with whom Dr. Southey had held a free correspondence upwards of ten years, chiefly on

literary matters. The following paragraph, which, to say the least, is calculated to give a most favourable impression of the writer's candour, will be read with interest :—

"Mr. Moore's notes will not excite in me any angry feeling, in whatever temper they may have been written. Where they show that I have been mistaken, I will correct the error; and, when I may think him so, shall readily allow that freedom of opinion, which it is equally my duty to exercise for myself and to allow in others."

The other letter is dated "Keswick, August 17th, 1835," and bears more directly on the question before us. The gentleman to whom it was addressed, has permitted us not only to give the substance of it in these remarks, but also to publish an engraved fac-simile.

We direct particular attention to the following extract :—

"My intention is to incorporate in it" (the next edition of the Life of Wesley) "whatever new information has been brought forward by subsequent biographers, and, of course, to correct every error that has been pointed out, or that I myself can discover. Mr. Alexander Knox has convinced me that I was mistaken in supposing ambition entered largely into Mr. Wesley's actuating impulses. Upon the subject he wrote a long and most admirable paper, and gave me permission to affix it to my own work, whenever it might be reprinted. This I shall do, and make such alterations in the book as are required in consequence."

The fact, then, of Dr. Southey's change of opinion is undeniable. In August, 1835, we find him acknowledging his mistake, in supposing that "ambition entered largely into Mr. Wesley's actuating impulses;" in November of the same year, he expresses his readiness "to correct the error," wherever "Mr. Moore's notes" may "show" that he was "mistaken;" and in December,

1836, more than a year afterwards, he repeats to Mr. Carne, almost in the same words, the statement which he had made in his letter to Mr. Nichols; thus proving it to have been his settled conviction that he had mistaken Mr. Wesley's character in this particular, and declaring his purpose to acknowledge the error in the next edition of his work. We are glad to be able to make this fact patent to the world. It not only rescues the character of Wesley from any odium which the mistake of Dr. Southey might cast upon it; but it also saves the reputation of Southey from the consequences of his own erroneous opinion, and from the omission of his son to place his father's final judgment of Wesley fairly and fully before the public, who have a right to know whether a man of the Doctor's literary character adheres to the opinions he has put forth respecting such a man as Wesley, or has subsequently found reason to modify them.

Objectionable manner in which Mr. Taylor speaks of Wesley.

It is more difficult to deal with Isaac Taylor's exhibition of the character of Wesley. He writes throughout as if he occupied an intellectual position at an immeasurable distance above the subject of his notice. No university professor could possibly express himself in a more lofty tone, or in more confident terms, respecting the mind and attainments of a boy at a village school, than this author employs in speaking of Wesley. He is, indeed, sufficiently severe on the other censors of this great and good man. Southey's solutions of the phenomena of Methodism "are nothing better than frigid absurdities."* Coleridge, while protesting against "his friend's vapid ignorance," himself "turned away from Methodism, as an enigma he had not solved in any measure that was satisfactory to himself."†

Mr. Taylor labours under none of these difficulties; the whole case is open to his vision. He can gauge not only

* "Wesley and Methodism," p. 85. † *Ibid.*, p. 86.

the mind of Wesley, but all the possible capabilities of his nature for the work to which he had devoted his life. In the character of a philosopher *par excellence*, he has resolved the man, and his means, and his work into their original elements. He can put his finger on the cause of every movement; and, what is a much greater power, can show how the deficiencies of Wesley's mind have been impressed on his work.

It seems from this learned writer's conclusions, that two elements combined to render perfect success in Wesley's enterprise impossible. He is admitted on all hands to have been eminently an evangelist. He began his work by labouring for the conversion of souls, and he was zealous for the accomplishment of this object to his dying day. But Mr. Taylor has discovered that it is not likely that those who "are concerned only or chiefly with the work of conversion, should be much conversant with, or should possess a correct knowledge of, the human heart, in the depth and variety of its range of emotions." * And, according to him, this was Wesley's great defect. He was, we are told, "not so gifted with the reflective faculties, that a comprehensive grasp of human nature could have been possible to him." † Indeed, "Wesley knew no more what a child is, what a boy is, what human nature is, than he might have known if he himself had been, and had never been anything else than, a varnished anatomy, lodging an intellect in a corner of its cranium." ‡ Yet this man, with all these serious defects, had some good in him. "His countenance shone with goodness, truth, purity, benevolence; a sanctity belonged to him, which those near him felt." § But his work is lamentably im-

Wesley's alleged defects.

* "Wesley and Methodism," p. 78. † *Ibid.*, p. 81.
‡ *Ibid.*, p. 83. § *Ibid.*, p. 87.

perfect; for although Methodism "has shown itself a masterpiece of social organization for promoting conversion, and securing its conquests,* it is deficient in those elements that might entitle it to be spoken of as a Church."† For it is a settled fact that "to found a Church is another sort of work; and it would demand powers of mind, and qualifications, intellectual and moral, quite of another order."‡

When any person comes before the public in this manner, claiming to speak thus *ex cathedrâ* as a philosopher, we are challenged to inquire into the depth and clearness of his own philosophy; and to ascertain whether the accuracy of his perceptions, and the uniform soundness of his judgment, are calculated to inspire unlimited confidence and respect. Happily we can do so, in this instance, without going beyond the range of these pages. Mr. Taylor, like every one else who has written of Wesley, had to speak of the strange noises which were heard at his father's house at Epworth. These curious phenomena have puzzled all who have studied them, from the days of Dr. Priestley to the present hour; at least, except Mr. Isaac Taylor. His philosophy is equal to the task, and the reader shall have the benefit of his curious and interesting solution of this difficult problem.

Mr. Isaac Taylor's philosophy.

"Why," he asks, "may not this be thought? Around us, as most believe, are beings of a high order, whether good or evil, and yet not cognizable by the senses of man. But the analogies of the visible world favour the supposition that, besides these, there are orders, or species, of all grades, and some perhaps not more intelligent than apes, or than pigs. That these species have no liberty,

* "Wesley and Methodism," p. 76. † *Ibid.*, p. 84.
‡ *Ibid.*, p. 77.

ordinarily, to infringe upon the world, is manifest; nevertheless, chances, or mischances, may, in long cycles of time, throw some over his boundary, and give him an hour's leave to disport himself among things palpable."* And hence, when we hear of the Epworth rectory noises, the drummer of Tedworth, or any other disturbance bordering on the supernatural, we are, like true and enlightened philosophers, to believe that some spiritual pig or ape has been by "chances or mischances thrown over his boundary," and is "disporting himself among things palpable." But if this course and such analogical inductions are warranted by philosophy, if such "thoughts" are justified by this sublime and sacred science, then we must no longer regard poor Blake's brilliant picture of a ghostly flea as the effort of a disordered imagination, but rather as the result of a flight into the highest regions of philosophy.†

Wesley's character.

We are as ready as Mr. Taylor to admit that Wesley had frailties and defects: no desire is felt to laud him by exaggerating his intellectual power, or by claiming for him any unreasonable *status* as a great philosopher. But we do boldly challenge for him the reputation of a great and good man. And, notwithstanding all we have read, we are confirmed in the opinion that Wesley's knowledge of human nature was a deep which Mr. Taylor's plummet cannot sound; that his grasp of mind Mr. Taylor has never accurately comprehended; whilst his unparalleled labours, crowned as they have been by the abundant blessing of God, ought to have saved him from the everlasting nibbling and fly-blowing by which his reputation has been assailed from the days of his toil to the present hour.

* "Wesley and Methodism," p. 22.

† Allan Cunningham's "Lives of Painters," &c.

CHAPTER II.

WESLEYAN THEOLOGY AND EVANGELIZATION.

In proceeding to the consideration of Wesleyan theology, we do not intend to discuss the entire articles of religion, or furnish the outline of a body of divinity: this would be out of place. Wesley did not found his preaching or form his Societies on any novel theological basis. He professed to believe and to teach the doctrines of the Church of England. All that will be necessary, therefore, will be to make such observations as appear to be called for on those points respecting which his views and expositions have attracted particular attention, or led to controversy.

General orthodoxy of Methodist doctrines.

In all the controversies which arose respecting the religious tenets of the early Methodists, it was invariably maintained that theirs was "the old religion;" "the religion of the primitive Church;" "the religion of the Church of England." With respect, therefore, to the doctrines which refer to the Divine Being,—the great catholic faith of the Divine Trinity in Unity,—and the implied doctrines regarding the Son of God, and the Holy Ghost who proceeds from the Father and the Son, the Methodists hold opinions in common with all *orthodox*, *Protestant*, and *evangelical* Churches. "Whatever of a doctrinal kind is contained in the 'three Creeds,' they cordially subscribe. If any of them, indeed, hesitate to affirm those Athanasian clauses which have been styled 'damnatory,' it is by no means on account of any scepticism as to the Trinitarian teaching which pervades that confession. 'That we

worship one God in Trinity, and Trinity in Unity, neither confounding the persons nor dividing the substance,' is the tenet of this body,—which thus claims to be equidistant from Sabellianism and from Tritheism." *

On the doctrines of the fall of man, and of original sin, the opinions and teaching of Wesley were equally explicit and orthodox. There are few religious treatises in the English language more clear in statement, logical in argument, or irrefragable in conclusions, than "Wesley on Original Sin," written in reply to Dr. Taylor. The sum of this, as a Methodist doctrine, has been thus stated: It asserts "the total fall of man in Adam, and his utter inability to recover himself, or take one step towards his recovery, 'without the grace of God preventing him, that he may have a good will, working with him when he has that good will.'"

Particular specification of doctrines.

It is scarcely necessary to allude to the views entertained by Methodists respecting the general judgment, eternal duration of rewards and punishments, and other topics, on all of which they hold sentiments similar to other orthodox Protestant Christians. We therefore proceed to notice more particularly those doctrines which were made the subject of frequent conversation in the early Conferences, and respecting which opposition and controversy arose.

Justification by faith. What justification is meant.

And here we may most properly place first in order the views which Wesley maintained respecting justification by faith in Christ, and its concomitant privileges and blessings; and which lay at the foundation of all his labours and all his successes. His views on this point, in fact, constitute the key to all Wesleyan theology.

In speaking on this important subject, it is of the greatest consequence that we clearly understand what is

* "Wesleyan Methodist Magazine" for 1853, p. 214.

meant by "justification." It is not that general blessing of grace which has come upon all mankind through the mediation and sacrifice of Christ. It is fully believed that God, for the sake of Jesus Christ, so far delivers all mankind from the guilt of Adam's sin, as to place them in a salvable state; but this is not the act of mercy now under consideration. Nor are we now speaking of the case of those who, like the inhabitants of heathen countries, have never heard the Gospel of Christ: the terms on which such will be "accepted" of God are beside the present question. The justification of believers before men by the evidence of their good works is also beyond our present inquiry; for we are not now treating of the declarative justification described by St. James in the second chapter of his Epistle. Nor is the final justification of men at the last day the subject of the present inquiry. This will hereafter be particularly noticed. That of which we now speak is the present justification of a penitent sinner before God.

The subjects of justification. Its nature.

Such a penitent sinner is assumed to have been the subject of that prevenient grace which is vouchsafed to all men through the Second Adam, although this has not removed the curse to which sin has exposed him, nor the total depravity of his nature: and, being regarded as a penitent sinner, he is supposed to be fully convinced that this is his real condition; and, consequently, to feel himself guilty, condemned, and exposed to wrath; conviction producing in him a genuine sorrow for sin, and making him intensely anxious to be delivered from its penalty and power.

If, then, it be asked, What is the Wesleyan view of this justification? the answer is, that thus to justify a sinner is to account and consider him relatively righteous, and to

deal with him as such, notwithstanding his past actual unrighteousness; by clearing, absolving, discharging, and releasing him from various penal evils, and especially from the wrath of God, and the liability to eternal death, which by that past unrighteousness he had deserved; and by accepting him as if just, and admitting him to the state, the privileges, and the rewards of righteousness. To be justified, say the "Minutes" of Conference in the year 1747, "is to be pardoned and received into God's favour; into such a state that, if we continue therein, we shall be finally saved."

From this it is evident, that justification and the forgiveness of sins are substantially the same blessing; that is, these terms refer to one and the same act of God, to one and the same privilege of His believing people. That which viewed in one respect is pardon, viewed in another is justification; and hence we find St. Paul using the words "justification" and "forgiveness" as synonymous terms. (Acts xiii. 38, 39; and Rom. iii.) In explanation of these views of justification it may be observed, that they do not, in the least degree, alter or diminish our estimate of the evil nature and desert of sin. It is the holy God that justifieth; and, by this act of grace, sin is not made less "exceeding sinful." But these views of justification are directly opposed to the doctrines of many of the Papists and of the Mystics on the subject, who speak as if justification were not merely reckoning the sinner righteous, but actually making him so; thus confounding the two distinct but contemporaneous blessings, justification and regeneration. Justification, it may be added, respects all past sin. We are not partially forgiven, but all manner of sin is pardoned. Again, this justification is no more irreversible, than it is eternal; and as the person who is now

justified was once condemned, so, by falling into sin and unbelief, he may again come into condemnation. And, further, as this justification may be forfeited, so it may be recovered; "our backslidings" may be "healed," and the favour of God be again restored. Another and very glorious aspect of this great blessing is that which presents the pardoned sinner to our view as adopted into the family of God. This is no mere notion, but a blessed reality: simultaneous with his justification, the believer is "born again" by the Spirit of God. God condescends, therefore, to become not only his Friend, but his Father, and he becomes entitled to the inheritance of the children. And this real change having passed on the soul of the believer, is recognised by the work of the Spirit; and hence the same act of grace which in one aspect renders the guilty sinner relatively righteous, also constitutes him, who was before an alien, a child of God and a member of the family of grace.

The immediate results of justification. Its method.

Any exposition of justification, however, must be very imperfect without a specific detail of its immediate results. For as justification is the entrance upon, so its concomitants are the substance of, a Christian life. Amity and intercourse between the pardoning God and the pardoned sinner are then restored. "Being justified by faith, we have peace with God," (Rom. v. 1,) and consequently unforbidden access to His presence. Besides these blessings, justification is inseparably connected with another, of the greatest magnitude and interest,—*the habitual indwelling of the Holy Spirit.* (Gal. iii. 13, 14; iv. 6; Acts ii. 36.) It is this inhabitation of the Spirit that is the source of all truly Christian comfort and Christian holiness. Of this divine indwelling the immediate effects are, *tranquillity of conscience,* (Rom. viii. 15, 16; v. 5,) *power over sin,*

(Rom. viii. 1,) and a *joyous hope of heaven.* (Rom. v. 2; Gal. v. 5; Rom. xv. 13.)

It will now be necessary to state, in as precise terms as possible, "the method" by which justification, according to the views of Wesley, is to be obtained. Here it must be first observed, that the originating cause of all this display of mercy is the free, undeserved, and spontaneous love of God toward fallen man. (Titus ii. 11; iii. 4, 5; Rom. iii. 24.) But God is wise, and holy, and just, as well as merciful; and consequently His mercy can only be displayed toward mankind in consonance with His purity and justice. Therefore, we are justified through our Lord Jesus Christ, and He "is the sole *meritorious cause* of our justification: what He did in obedience to the precepts of the law, and what He suffered in satisfaction of its penalty, taken together, constitute that mediatorial righteousness, for the sake of which the Father is ever well pleased in Him." Yet although it is necessary to refer here to the Saviour's active obedience, it is equally proper to observe, that the Scriptures evidently assign a great preponderance, if not an exclusive influence, to the sufferings of Christ. Hence we are said to be "justified by His *blood,*" to be "reconciled to God by the *death* of His Son;" and are told, that "Christ once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God, being put *to death* in the flesh." (Rom. v. 9, 10; Eph. i. 7; 1 Peter iii. 18.) Lastly, we notice the instrumental means of our justification. The merit of the death of Christ does not operate necessarily to the salvation of the sinner, so as to produce pardon as an unavoidable effect, but through the instrumentality of faith. "The faith to which the privilege of justification is annexed, is such a belief of the Gospel, by the power of the Spirit of God, as leads us to come to

Christ, to receive Christ, to trust in Christ, and to commit the keeping of our souls into His hands, in humble confidence of His ability and His willingness to save us." *

Conscious conversion.

It has been thought proper to speak at large on this essential doctrine; and it will be seen at once that it makes a conversion of which the subject is conscious, a grand element of Methodistic belief. No person can be the subject of this penitence, exercise this faith, have this justification as its result, and rejoice in the peace of God, the witness of the Spirit, and a hope of heaven, without being deeply sensible of the glorious change which has passed upon him. This, then, was the doctrine which exposed the founder of Methodism to the opposition of all the formalism of the Church, and the ridicule of all the philosophy of the world.

The correspondence with John Smith.

Soon after his first Conference, a person supposed to have been an eminent dignitary of the Church, under the name of "John Smith," carried on a long and very friendly correspondence with Wesley, respecting his doctrines and course of action; and one of his prime ends in these letters was to induce Wesley to withdraw from this doctrine of conscious conversion, and of the experience of a direct witness of the Spirit testifying to the heart of the believer that he is a child of God. This correspondence was conducted for a considerable time with great ability on both sides, until at length the reverend gentleman calling himself "John Smith" retired from the contest, and left Wesley to proceed with his work of bringing sinners to God, and rearing up a body of Christian people, who, if there be one prominent element in their vocation, are

* See this subject most ably treated in Dr. Bunting's "Sermon on Justification by Faith;" to which admirable discourse we have been much indebted.

bound to testify to the world, that "the Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirits that we are the children of God."

The doctrine of universal redemption. Wesley's explanation of it.

Another prominent feature of Wesleyan theology, and that which first brought the founder of Methodism into collision with his earliest friends, was his adherence to the doctrine of universal redemption,—or, in other words, that Christ had died for all mankind; and that, consequently, all are provisionally interested in the merits of His death. Mr. Whitefield, whilst in America, fully embraced the Calvinistic theory of absolute election and predestination; so that on his return to England, as stated in the preceding pages, he not only stood aloof from his former friends, but actually preached in opposition to them in Moorfields, at Kingswood, and at other places.

The points at issue between the parties, or rather the doctrines to which Wesley adhered,—although by doing so he lost his friends,—may be most appropriately set forth by a brief summary of his sermon on "Free Grace," which he preached in Bristol, in 1740, for the express purpose of checking the spread of Calvinism, and which consequently hastened the secession of those who were attached to that system. The subject of that sermon was Rom. viii. 32. From this text he shows, that as God "spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all," the grace or love of God, whence cometh our salvation, is free *in* ALL and free *for* ALL. He then deals with the objection, that according to the supposed decree of absolute predestination this cannot be; and proceeds to show that no modification of the doctrine, or of the terms in which it is put forth, can reconcile it to the teaching of the text, if it amounts to this,—that this election is a divine appointment, and that the elect are saved, and none else; insisting that, although it may be called the election

of grace, and no mention made of reprobation, or of the non-elect, it must amount to the same thing; that some will infallibly be saved, and others as infallibly be lost, and that irrespectively of themselves. He then shows that this makes preaching vain; that its tendency is to destroy some branches of holiness, and all the comfort of religion, —as it must in the case of the non-elect,—and zeal for good works; and that it is in direct opposition to a multitude of texts of Holy Scripture, which distinctly declare that Christ died even for those who are lost; (Rom. xiv. 15;) that He died for all; (1 John ii. 2; 1 Tim. iv. 10; ii. 6; Heb. ii. 9;) and that the reason why all are not saved is not the will of God, (Ezek. xviii. 3–32; 2 Peter iii. 9,) but the obstinate and rebellious will of man. (John v. 40; Matt. xxiii. 37.) On these grounds, Wesley argued that the doctrine of absolute predestination tends "to overthrow the whole Christian revelation," and that it is, besides, chargeable with the blasphemy of representing Christ as a hypocrite and deceiver, by speaking and appearing as if He willed all to be saved, when in reality He did not, but actually by His own decree had sealed the perdition of multitudes. He closed this discourse by insisting that the only fixed and irreversible decree which God ever issued respecting mankind, amounts to just this: "I will set before the sons of men life and death, blessing and cursing; and the soul that chooseth life shall live, and the soul that chooseth death shall die."

Throughout the whole of his course Wesley adhered to these views, and maintained with great ability and consistency the doctrine of general redemption as a cardinal truth in all Methodist preaching. He, however, had not merely the main and primary question to debate and settle; he found other evils arising out of this, which

Wesley's views of the tendency of Calvinistic doctrines to Antinomianism.

occasioned even greater difficulty and more polemic discussion than the principal doctrine itself. He believed that the prevalence of the opinions, that the election of grace had appointed the elect unto eternal life, and that they, being called, would on the principle of final perseverance be certainly saved, had greatly undermined and weakened the injunctions of the Bible to practical holiness. Indeed, the extent to which Antinomian error was carried in that day is truly astonishing. This induced Wesley, in the Conference of 1770, to place on the "Minutes" the celebrated propositions which called forth the violent opposition of Mr. Shirley and his friends. These were intended as a protest against the error, that faith in Christ is to be regarded as a substitute for practical holiness, rather than as an efficient means to its attainment.

The Shirley Declaration, as we have seen, did not in any respect contravene this purpose: it was mainly a protest against justification by works,—a doctrine which no one could repudiate more earnestly than Wesley. It was designed not to support, but to explain, the obnoxious "Minutes," and of course could only serve the purpose for which it was intended. The Circular printed in Dublin, to which reference has been made, did this. It pointed out distinctly that the necessity of good works was urged in the "Minutes" as essential to our acceptance at the last day; and Matt. xii. 37 is quoted in reference to this point; while it is distinctly stated, "With justification, as it means our first acceptance with God, this proposition hath nothing to do." Wesley then adds the remarkable passage, "'T is true, thirty years ago I was very angry with Bishop Bull, that great light of the Christian Church, because in his *Harmonia Apostolica* he distinguishes our first from our final justification, and affirms both inward

and outward good works to be the condition of the latter, though not of the former." Also, referring to the last paragraph of the "Minutes," he says, "Perhaps the former part of this sentence is a little too strong. Instead of 'almost naturally,' I would say, 'very frequently.' But the latter contains a truth of the deepest importance, and one that cannot be too much inculcated. Every hour God is more or less pleased with us, according to the whole of our inward and outward behaviour."

Important ends secured by Fletcher's "Checks."

These and other expressions led him to admit that "the said 'Minutes' are not sufficiently guarded in the way they are expressed;" whilst the vast importance of protecting his people against Antinomianism, and of rearing up an efficient barrier throughout the English Churches against that deadly delusion, induced him to send forth Fletcher's "Checks" into general circulation. And these, in a masterly and effectual manner, met the wants of that time, and, to a great extent, of all times. For Antinomianism is the master device of Satan for defeating the operation of the Gospel. The vicar of Madeley, in these able tracts, "demonstrated that those propositions (of the 'Minutes') were equally agreeable to Scripture, reason, and the writings of the soundest of even the Calvinistic divines. He largely showed, that as the *day of judgment* differs from the *day of conversion*, so must the conditions of *justification:* that, as in the one we are considered as mere sinners, and raised out of guilt and misery by the act of God's mercy, through faith in the merits of His Son; so, in the other, we are considered members of the mystical body of Christ; and being enabled by His grace to do works acceptable to God, we are justified in that awful day by the *evidence*, though not the *merit*, of those works, inward and outward; and yet, that we are indebted for *both* to that glorious act of

divine love, proclaimed by St. Paul, 'God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself:' and, lastly, that the propositions in question secured the one without weakening the other." *

Christian perfection.

Another peculiarity of Wesleyan theology is commonly known as the doctrine of Christian perfection. Perhaps no element of Wesley's teaching, nor any part of his practice, occasioned more violent or long-continued opposition than his insisting on the attainment of a spiritual blessing which he called "Christian perfection," as the common privilege of believers. To this day the doctrine is by Isaac Taylor denounced as a "paradox," and by Southey as perilous; but these writers do not appear to have given the subject sufficient consideration to understand it. The perfection which Wesley taught is not an absolute perfection. It is not, as he most particularly declares, the being made "perfect in knowledge." Those who enjoy it "are not free from ignorance, no, nor from mistake. We are no more to expect any man to be infallible than to be omniscient. They are not free from infirmities, such as weakness or slowness of understanding, irregular quickness or heaviness of imagination. Such, in another kind, are impropriety of language, ungracefulness of pronunciation; to which one might add a thousand nameless defects, either in conversation or behaviour. From such infirmities as these none are perfectly freed till their spirits return to God; neither can we expect, till then, to be wholly freed from temptation; for 'the servant is not above his Master.' But neither in this sense is there any absolute perfection on earth. There is no perfection of degrees, none which does not admit of a continual increase." †

* Henry Moore's "Life of Wesley," vol. ii., p. 240.

† Wesley on Christian Perfection, "Works," vol. xi., p. 359.

Having thus shown how Wesley guarded the doctrine against mistake and abuse, we give the authoritative definition of it from the "Minutes" of 1744:—

"*Q.* What is it to be sanctified?

"*A.* To be renewed in the image of God in righteousness and true holiness.

"*Q.* What is implied in being a perfect Christian?

"*A.* The loving God with all our heart, and mind, and soul. (Deut. vi. 5.)

"*Q.* Does this imply that all inward sin is taken away?

"*A.* Undoubtedly; or how can we be said to be 'saved from all our uncleannesses?' (Ezek. xxxvi. 29.)"

Wesley then proceeds to show that this grace is promised; (Psalm cxxx. 8; Ezek. xxxvi. 25–29; 2 Cor. vii. 1; Deut. xxx. 6;) prayed for; (John xvii. 20–23; Eph. iii. 14, &c.; 1 Thess. v. 23;) commanded; (Matt. v. 48; xxii. 37;) shown to have been actually attained; (1 John iv. 17;) and frequently asserted in the New Testament as the privilege of Christians. (1 John iii. 8; Eph. v. 27; Rom. viii. 3, 4; Titus ii. 11–14; Luke i. 60, &c.) After which, he puts the question, "What is Christian perfection?" which he answers thus: "The loving God with all our heart, mind, soul, and strength. This implies, that no wrong temper, none contrary to love, remains in the soul; and that all the thoughts, words, and actions are governed by pure love." *

Summary review of Wesleyan theology.

Whatever other charges may be preferred against the system of religious doctrines which Wesley believed and taught, it cannot be said to lack homogeneousness and consistency. Pronouncing all mankind to be totally depraved, and in a state of guilt and condemnation, and thus exposed to everlasting death; it insisted on instant

* Wesley's "Works," vol. xi., p. 379.

repentance toward God, by putting away all sin, and then assured all of the free mercy of God in Christ, offering every penitent sinner pardon through faith in His blood. To all these the Holy Spirit, as an indwelling Comforter, was promised; bearing witness with their spirit of the change that had passed upon them, and producing a blessed consciousness that they had indeed been translated from the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of God's dear Son. With this forgiveness it was declared the believing soul would "be born again," and made a child of God by faith in Christ Jesus. Such persons were, however, told, that although they had thus obtained power over all outward sin, and were, by the grace of God, enabled to conquer every temptation, and to repress every unholy desire, they must not be surprised if such desires and other inward evidences of remaining evil should appear, and mar their peace and joy; but that, even in this case, they should not despond, but live near to God, and pray, hope, and believe for entire deliverance; for the "blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth from all sin;" and the promise of God is clear and full, "He shall redeem Israel from all his sins." But even when this blessing was attained, and the happy believer lived under the full influence of the perfect love of God, he was cautioned that his probation had not ceased; that he was still exposed to temptation, still liable to fall, and still bound to grow in grace. Repudiating the silly conceit, that what is perfect cannot grow,—as if a perfect child could not grow, nor a perfect tree grow,—the Methodists were taught, that in this state the attainment was merely negative, the destruction of sin out of the heart, which has henceforth to grow in grace until "filled with all the fulness of God."

In dismissing this subject, it is proper to observe, that

Wesleyan standard of religious doctrine.

although there is a remarkable doctrinal unity in the theological writings of Wesley and his brother, John Fletcher, and other early advocates of Methodism, they are not to be considered as equally recognised exponents of Wesleyan Methodist theology. Those "Sermons" of Wesley, which in the third and subsequent editions of his works are numbered from one to fifty-three, together with his "Notes on the New Testament," form the standard of Wesleyan Methodist doctrine; and, as such, are frequently referred to in chapel deeds, as the authority to which all Wesleyan preaching must conform. To these, therefore, all who would possess an accurate acquaintance with Wesleyan theology should refer. The exhibition of the doctrines of the Gospel which they contain is remarkably clear, concise, and complete.

Wesleyan evangelization.

But the impression which this or any other system of doctrine would make on the world, must depend mainly upon the agency by which it is taught, urged, and enforced upon the public mind. We therefore proceed to offer some observations on Wesleyan evangelization. Now it must be evident to every candid observer, that the efficiency of this agency arose out of the experimental operation of the doctrines taught. Wesley and his brother lived very exemplary lives, rendered the most devoted service to what they believed to be the work of the Lord, and preached with all their learning and energy, before their conversion, without producing any remarkable results. Nothing took place under their ministrations, any more than under those of other clergymen. There can, therefore, be no pretence for ascribing the effects which were afterward seen, to any thing in their learning, talents, or constitutional temperament.

Yet no sooner did they begin to preach after their con-

Its success arose out of the vital truths which the preachers had received.

version, than sinners under their word were convinced, and converted to God. Even before Charles Wesley had sufficiently recovered his health to be able to preach, his personal intercourse with the families of friends led many to the experience of salvation. And afterward, as the brothers proceeded on their evangelical labours, conversions everywhere became numerous. Nor were these results limited to the preaching of those collegians and clergymen. When John Nelson, the stone-mason, preached in Yorkshire, and Stephen Nichols, the Cornish miner, on Newlyn Green, the hearers were convinced of their sin, and led to seek, and find, the mercy of God in Christ. And, as we have seen in the preceding narrative, this process continued, until multitudes in all parts of the country were made obedient to the faith, and reclaimed from the ways of sin to the service of God.

But although these effects were produced in a great measure through the influence of Gospel truth, it is alleged by Mr. Isaac Taylor that it was not by any particular novelty of doctrine. "The very same things," he declares, "had been affirmed, from year to year, by able and sincere preachers in the hearing of congregations assenting to all they heard,—not, indeed, without effect; yet with no such effect as that which ordinarily, if not invariably, attended the Methodistic preaching." This same author asserts it to be "patent and unquestionable, that Protestant doctrine, proclaimed by men various-gifted and qualified, (the Methodist preachers,) did, through a course of years, affect the minds of thousands of persons, not in the way of transient excitement, but effectively and permanently." And it is further admitted, as to the efficient cause of these effects, that "we hold it as an undoubted truth, and a truth apart from which the facts before us must be wholly inexplicable,

that the Methodistic proclamation of the Gospel was rendered effective by a divine energy, granted at that time in a sovereign manner, and in an unwonted degree." *

And the divine influence which accompanied their word.

Mr. Taylor, having made these candid admissions, proceeds to consider "the principal elements of that religious impression which the Methodistic preaching so generally produced." But would it not have been more natural and satisfactory to pause a moment to consider the cause of these effects with more attention? The "divine sovereignty," in such a case, affords a solution somewhat too general. Could Mr. Taylor find no peculiarity in the preachers, or in their doctrines, which might be taken into consideration? When he says, that other "preachers" faithfully preached "the same things," does he really mean that it was common in that day for the ministers in the Established Church, or among the Dissenters, to insist on the imminent danger of impenitent sinners, the necessity of instant repentance, the infinite willingness of God for Christ's sake to receive the vilest and the worst, and to give to such a present pardon for all their sin? When he says in general terms, that Protestant doctrines were taught, we raise no demur; but it is well known, that the truths just stated did form the staple of the sermons of the early Methodists: it was their glory to preach a full, a free, and a present salvation. And it is equally certain, as we think, that these truths were far from being generally and prominently held forth by other preachers.

Mr. Isaac Taylor's views on this subject examined.

Mr. Taylor candidly admits that the effects which followed Methodist preaching must be inexplicable, unless an unwonted degree of divine energy is admitted as the operating cause. But if this admission must be made as respects the hearers, why should it be denied as influencing

* Isaac Taylor's "Wesley and Methodism," p. 145.

the preachers? What hinders us from admitting that they were taught, directed, and influenced by the Spirit of God, who so signally accompanied their word by "signs following?" We are bold to assert, that the key to the whole case is here: the doctrine of conversion, as taught by Wesley,—that is, the assured reality of a penitent sinner's obtaining a distinct and joyous sense of pardoning mercy, and of his adoption as a child of God through faith in Christ Jesus,—had been realized by the Methodist preachers, formed the subject of their sermons, and gave tone and spirit to all their teaching. And this, however stigmatized as "disease," from the days of Festus to the time of Southey, is no other than the salvation of the Gospel. The Wesleys and the preachers employed by them were themselves the subjects of this spiritual change, and were made the habitation of God by His Spirit. They went forth, therefore, to proclaim the truths of the Gospel with "the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven," not as an act of inexplicable sovereignty, but in the manner promised by Christ to His disciples at the beginning, which, He declared, should continue unto "the end of the world."

The Methodist preachers, therefore, did not preach as men merely delivering a discourse, or giving instruction; but rather as persons burdened with the word of the Lord. They had seen and felt the evil of sin, under the convictions of the Holy Ghost; they had tasted the wormwood and the gall, and were prepared to speak of it as men who had just escaped shipwreck would speak of the horrors of the storm. "Being justified by faith," they had obtained peace with God, and preached it not as a duty or a privilege at a distance, but as a glorious treasure which they had in possession. Above all, they had, as a body, consecrated themselves to the service of God under the guidance and

influence of His Spirit; and "an unwonted degree of divine energy" did indeed accompany their word, producing the most glorious and permanent results.

Other Wesleyan agencies.

But the preachers who were called out by Wesley to itinerate through the country, and of whom we have thus spoken, although they were his principal assistants in these evangelizing operations, were not the only ones. In fact, nothing lies deeper in the causation of Wesleyan progress, than the intense desire felt generally, by those who are truly converted to God, to bring all who come into contact with them to experience the same salvation. Numerous and striking instances of this holy passion of soul are found in the preceding pages. Converts, whether male or female, young or old, would speak to their friends, neighbours, and companions, of what God had done for them; and would point out the fact, that in the Gospel the same salvation was promised to every penitent believer. These appeals, urged with that deep pity and yearning charity which, perhaps, newly converted souls feel in the highest intensity, would be very frequently influential.

Prayer-meetings

Perhaps we are indebted to this cause for the establishment of an agency which has certainly not been the least efficient among the means of Wesleyan evangelization,—we mean public prayer-meetings. Men who never dared to preach, felt an intense desire for the salvation of their friends and neighbours. What could they do to promote this grand object? They could speak to them individually, as they met them; but such conversations, for want either of solemnity or of freedom from intrusion and distraction, did not satisfy their desires. What could they do more? They could pray for them; and it occurred to their minds, that their prayers might be more effectual

if they prayed with them. Two or three young men, thus influenced, made the attempt; they invited their neighbours to join them in supplication: the invitation was accepted,—they met,—the blessing of God came down on the little company, and good was done. The experiment was repeated, and many sinners were brought to God. Hence the practice became general, and has been of incalculable advantage. Tens of thousands of people are thus collected together, generally in small companies; but sometimes two or three hundred are assembled in one place. In these meetings spiritual hymns are sung, sometimes a short exhortation is given, and several persons offer up fervent prayer to God. Great indeed have been the fruits of this practice.

CHAPTER III.

WESLEYAN DISCIPLINE.

Wesleyan discipline did not originate in a preconceived plan.

In treating of the discipline of Methodism during the life of Wesley, it will be necessary to bear very distinctly in mind the important fact, that these Societies did not arise from any pre-arranged plan. No code of laws or fully developed constitution was laid down as the basis on which a religious community should be established; nor, as the body increased, was it moulded according to pattern, plan, or theory. It grew up according to the law and power of an inward life, and in conformity with the manifest indications of Divine Providence. Hence we have to consider the laws and regulations of the body not so much as parts of a system, but rather as measures devised just as they were required for the accomplishment of certain important objects during the ministerial career of the founder of Methodism.

Its origin and character. Rules of the Society.

The following statement presents a succinct, authoritative, and truthful view of the case. "What we are as a religious body, we have become, both in doctrine and in discipline, by the leadings of the providence of God. But for the special visitation of the Holy Spirit, that great work of which we are all the subjects, and which bears upon it marks so unequivocal of an eminent work of God, could not have existed. In that form of discipline and government which it has assumed, it was adapted to no preconceived plan of man. Our venerable founder kept one end only in view,—the diffusion of scriptural Christianity throughout

the land, and the preservation of all who believed, through grace, in the simplicity of the Gospel. This guiding principle he steadily followed; and to that he surrendered, cautiously but faithfully, whatever in his preconceived opinions he discovered to be contrary to the indications of Him whose the work was, and to whom he had yielded himself up implicitly, as His servant and instrument. The object has at no time been to make a sect, but to extend the Christianity of the Scriptures throughout the land; not to give currency to a mere system of opinions, but to bring men everywhere under the effectual influence of the truth which is according to godliness; and, in the degree to which God should give His blessing to these efforts, to fold the gathered flock from danger, and to supply to it wholesome and sufficient pasture." * This was the origin and object of Wesley's discipline, and as such it must be considered by all who would understand its nature and operation.

The discipline of the Connexion began with its organization. As soon as there were members, they were subject to rule; and their continuance as members was contingent on their continued observance of the rules, to which on their admission they promised obedience. These we have given at large,† and the particular attention of the reader is called to their character and requirements.

The preamble states the origin of the Methodist Societies in a plain and artless manner. And it must be acknowledged that nothing can be more catholic than the basis upon which these rules rest. Here are no theological dogmas, no merely sectarian points or opinions: a desire to flee from the wrath to come, and to be saved from sin, is

* The Pastoral Address of the Conference, 1824.

† See Appendix L, at the end of this volume.

all that is expected of any applicant for admission. And it is only requisite to continued membership that this desire be evinced by regularly meeting in class, according to the usages prescribed,—by avoiding all harm, as specified,—by doing good according to one's power,—and by attending on the appointed ordinances of God.

These rules formed the conditions of membership. Persons who were desirous of uniting with Wesley on those terms, were admitted members, and retained as such, so long as they continued to evince their sincerity by a careful and diligent compliance with these requirements. When this was not the case, the same power that admitted could remove; as is not obscurely intimated in the closing paragraph of the document: "If there be any among us who observe them not, who habitually break any of them, let it be made known unto them who watch over that soul, as they that must give an account. WE will admonish him of the error of his ways: WE will bear with him for a season. But then if he repent not, he hath no more place among us. WE have delivered our own souls."

So far therefore as membership is concerned, the terms of the original compact between Wesley and his people were just these:—those who promised to abide by the rules which he had prescribed, were admitted; but when, in his judgment, any of them ceased to observe them, they ceased to be recognised as members.

Meeting in class essential to membership. Duties of a leader.

The origin and importance of class-meetings have been already shown: we must here regard them as a condition of membership. It was considered essential that every Methodist should meet in class. On no other condition could any one have the privilege of being one of the Society. No substitute for the personal intercourse and oversight afforded by these means was allowed, and here

each was expected to contribute towards the support of the ministry. It was, however, not merely in a technical manner, that meeting in class constituted membership. It is not too much to say, that class-meetings created the Society. No other means, nor indeed all the other means united, could do so much to promote the collective brotherhood of the Methodists as these social means of grace. Here they learned to bear one another's burdens, to sympathize one with another, and to feel as members of a Christian community; while the association of the classes in Society-meetings and love-feasts extended this union to all the members of the Society.

In every class there was a person who was styled the "leader," and whose duty it was to see each of the members once a week, and to administer advice, reproof, or consolation, as occasion might require. It is necessary to observe here, that Wesley did not, as has been frequently alleged, direct his leaders to institute any inquisitorial inquiry respecting their members. They were, indeed, to inquire into their spiritual condition, with the simple purpose of assisting them in their endeavours to bring forth the fruit of the Spirit, the fruit of good living, to God's honour, and for the benefit of their fellow men. "The question" they had to solve, as he explicitly declared, "is not concerning the heart, but the life. And the general tenor of this, I do not say cannot be known, but cannot be hid without a miracle." * So that, although inward spiritual religion was the great object of Wesley's labours, he was so satisfied that where this existed, it would be manifested in a godly life, that he regarded external deportment generally as a sufficient test of character.

The office of leader being so very important, it might be

* Wesley's "Works," vol. ii., p. 48.

expected that especial care would be taken that suitable persons were appointed to perform its duties, and that clear and explicit rules should be laid down for their guidance. We accordingly find the following in the "Minutes" of the first Conference, respecting leaders:—

"Let each of them be diligently examined concerning his method of meeting a class. Let us recommend to all the following directions:—

"1. Let each leader carefully inquire how each soul in his class prospers: not only how each person observes the outward rules, but how he grows in the knowledge and love of God. 2. Let the leaders converse with all the preachers as frequently and as freely as possible. 3. Let every leader come into the room on Tuesday, as soon as the service is ended, and then sit down and commune with God in his heart till the preacher comes in. 4. Let no leader go out till the preacher goes. 5. Let none speak there but the preacher or the steward, unless in answer to a question. 6. Let every leader bring a note of every sick person in his class. 7. Let every leader send the same note to the visitor of the sick weekly." Having made these regulations respecting the leaders, Wesley advised, as a means of making the class-meetings more efficient, "Let the leaders frequently meet each other's classes; let us observe which leaders are most blessed to those under their care; and let those meet other classes as often as possible, and see what hinders their growth in grace." In those localities where no suitable person could be found to act as a leader, it was, in 1774, directed, "Let the preacher constantly meet the Society as a class." And in the following year the evil tendency of large overgrown classes having become apparent, the preachers were directed to "divide every one which contained above thirty members."

These rules and regulations for leaders and classes would be a sufficient explanation of the nature of these meetings, and defence of their character and usefulness, had not this institution been the object of more misrepresentation and abuse, than any other with which we are acquainted. That they are nearly allied to the Popish Confessional, is about the most moderate scandal which has been published respecting them. On this account it may be necessary to add, that they are what these rules indicate. Each of these sections of a Methodist Society is what its name imports,—a class;- that is, a few members, usually from ten to twenty, who are placed under the care of an experienced Christian, called the "leader." These meet at a place and time appointed once in each week, when, after singing and prayer, the leader speaks of his religious experience during the week, and then briefly inquires into the religious state of each member in succession, giving such advice, consolation, encouragement, or reproof, as their own account of their spiritual condition may seem to require. As to any approach to confession, in the Romanist sense, the allegation is purely ridiculous. Every person speaks of his state and feelings in terms as general as he pleases; and it is important to observe, that not one class in fifty has a minister for a leader. The leaders are almost always laymen. Sometimes, indeed, a class of females is placed under the care of a pious woman. It is, of course, not denied that among the thousands of these leaders some may occasionally act injudiciously; but it is with equal confidence affirmed, that not only are these classes generally conducted with order and religious propriety, but they are the means of incalculable blessing throughout the country. Here the ignorant are instructed in the things of God, the backward are roused to diligence,

the erring reproved, and the inquiring souls directed and encouraged in the ways of piety. Unnumbered thousands who have lived in every period of Methodism, will bless God through all eternity for the help derived from these social means of grace. Wesley, with great truth and judgment, called the classes "the sinews of the Societies."

Leaders to act in accordance with the assistant.

It was comparatively easy to make these regulations respecting the leaders of classes; but in the circumstances of the Connexion at that time, it must have been a very difficult task to secure their uniform operation. We accordingly find that, in the Conference of 1776, it was reported that in Ireland some of the leaders met without connexion with, or dependence on, the assistant. On which it was formally declared, "We have no such custom in the three kingdoms: it is overturning our discipline from the foundations. Either let them act under the direction of the assistant, or let them meet no more. It is true they can contribute money to the poor, but we dare not sell our discipline for money."

Regulations respecting the contributions in the classes.

As all the classes together in any one place constituted the Society, so all the Societies within the appointed geographical limits constituted the Circuit. Each of these having various temporal business pertaining to it, the necessity of the case led to the appointment of Society and Circuit stewards. At the first, as already stated, the sums contributed in the classes were appropriated to discharge the debt on a preaching-house; there being at the time no preachers dependent on the Society for support. Afterward a large proportion was applied to relieve the sick and the poor. But as the work extended, and preachers were numerously employed, their maintenance gradually became the principal element of expenditure. The amount first solicited from the members was one penny a week.

But when labourers were multiplied, this was found to be insufficient, and in addition thereto one shilling quarterly was expected, except from the very poor. This arrangement came into operation at so early a date, that Wesley in 1782 calls it our "original rule." At that Conference the following conversation took place on this subject:—

"*Q.* Have the weekly and quarterly contributions been duly made in our Societies?

"*A.* In many it has been shamefully neglected. To remedy this, 1. Let every assistant remind every Society, that it was our original rule: Every member contributes one penny weekly, (unless he is in extreme poverty,) and one shilling quarterly. Explain the reasonableness of this. 2. Let every leader receive the weekly contribution from each person in his class. 3. Let the assistant ask every person, at changing his ticket, 'Can you afford to observe our rule?' and receive what he is able to give."

Wesley so strongly insisted on this duty, that in a letter of his now before us he says, "But I understand there is one whole class (Brother Brewer's) which contribute nothing weekly. If so, give no tickets either to him or any of them. They break a fundamental rule of the Society."

The office and duties of Society stewards.

The office of Society steward, however, was greatly changed in its character and duties during the life of Wesley. It was first instituted at the time when a very large proportion of the money collected in the classes was appropriated to the relief of the poor, and especially of the sick; and the stewards were the persons who disbursed this relief. The office was therefore one of great labour and responsibility, and several stewards were required in a large Society. Prior to June, 1747, there were sixteen stewards in London. Wesley then reduced them to

seven, and gave them the following rules for their guidance :—

"1. You are to be men full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, that you may do all things in a manner acceptable to God.

"2. You are to be present every Tuesday and Thursday morning, in order to transact the temporal affairs of the Society.

"3. You are to begin and end every meeting with earnest prayer unto God, for a blessing on all your undertakings.

"4. You are to produce your accounts the first Tuesday in every month, that they may be transcribed into the ledger.

"5. You are to take it in turn, month by month, to be chairman. The chairman is to see that all the rules be punctually observed, and immediately to check him who breaks any of them.

"6. You are to do nothing without the consent of the minister, either actually had, or reasonably presumed.

"7. You are to consider, whenever you meet, 'God is here.' Therefore be deeply serious; utter no trifling word; speak as in His presence, and to the glory of His great name.

"8. When anything is debated, let one at once stand up and speak, the rest giving attention. And let him speak just loud enough to be heard, in love, and in the spirit of meekness.

"9. You are continually to pray and endeavour that a holy harmony of soul may in all things subsist among you; that in every step you may 'keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.'

"10. In all debates you are to watch over your spirits;

avoiding as fire all clamour and contention; being swift to hear, slow to speak; in honour every man preferring another before himself.

"11. If you cannot relieve, do not grieve, the poor: give them soft words, if nothing else: abstain from either sour looks or harsh words. Let them be glad to come, even though they should go empty away. Put yourself in the place of every poor man, and deal with him as you would that God should deal with you.

"These instructions we whose names are underwritten (being the present stewards of the Society at London) do heartily receive, and earnestly desire to conform to. In witness whereof, we have set our hands.

"N.B. If any steward shall break any of the preceding rules, after having been thrice admonished by the chairman, (whereof notice is to be immediately given to the minister,) he is no longer steward." *

In the course of time, the long-continued possession of this office by the same individuals appears to have occasioned some disorder. We accordingly find the following among the directions to the preachers in the Conference of 1768: "Be conscientiously exact in the whole Methodist discipline, one part of which has been generally neglected, namely, the changing of the stewards. This has been attended with ill consequences: many stewards have been ready to ride over the preachers' head. Let every assistant, at the next quarterly-meeting, change one steward, at least, in every Society, if there be therein any other man that can keep an account." And in 1786 we find the following direction: "Inform the leaders, that every assistant is to change the stewards and *leaders* when he sees good."

* Wesley's "Journal," June 4th, 1747.

But the disorder in which the Dublin Society was found in April, 1771, led Wesley to place on record his mature judgment respecting the duties, functions, responsibilities, and powers of the several officers of the Methodist Society. We give his words entire:—

The duties of office-bearers, as defined by Wesley.

"I. That it may be more easily discerned whether the members of our Societies are working out their own salvation, they are divided into little companies called 'classes.' One person in each of these is styled the 'leader:' it is his business, 1. To see each person in his class once a week; to inquire how their souls prosper; to advise, reprove, comfort, or exhort them: 2. To receive what they are willing to give toward the expenses of the Society: and, 3. To meet the assistant and the stewards once a week.

"II. This is the whole and sole business of a leader, or any number of leaders. But it is common for the assistant in any place, when several leaders are met together, to ask their advice as to any thing that concerns either the temporal or spiritual welfare of the Society. This he may or he may not do, as he sees best. I frequently do it in the larger Societies; and on many occasions I have found, that in a multitude of counsellors there is safety.

"III. From this short view of the original design of leaders, it is easy to answer the following questions:—

"*Q.* 1. What authority has a single leader?

"He has authority to meet his class, to receive their contributions, and to visit the sick in his class.

"*Q.* 2. What authority have all the leaders of a Society met together?

"They have authority to show their class papers to the assistant, to deliver the money they have received to the stewards, and to bring in the names of the sick.

"*Q.* 3. But have they not authority to restrain the assistant, if they think he acts improperly?

"No more than any member of the Society has. After mildly speaking to him, they are to refer the thing to Mr. W.

"*Q.* 4. Have they not authority to hinder a person from preaching?

"None but the assistant has this authority.

"*Q.* 5. Have they not authority to displace a particular leader?

"No more than the door-keeper has. To place and to displace leaders belongs to the assistant alone.

"*Q.* 6. Have they not authority to expel a particular member of the Society?

"No: the assistant only can do this.

"*Q.* 7. But have they not authority to regulate the temporal and spiritual affairs of the Society?

"Neither the one nor the other. Temporal affairs belong to the stewards; spiritual to the assistant.

"*Q.* 8. Have they authority to make any collection of a public nature?

"No: the assistant only can do this.

"*Q.* 9. Have they authority to receive the yearly subscription?

"No: this also belongs to the assistant.

"IV. Considering these things, can we wonder at the confusion which has been here for some years?

"If one wheel of a machine gets out of its place, what disorder must ensue!

"In the Methodist discipline, the wheels regularly stand thus: The assistant, the preachers, the stewards, the leaders, the people.

"But here the leaders, who are the lowest wheel but

one, were got quite out of their place. They were got at the top of all, above the stewards, the preachers, yea, and above the assistant himself.

"V. To this chiefly I impute the gradual decay of the work of God in Dublin. There has been a jar throughout the whole machine. Most of the wheels were hindered in their motion. The stewards, the preachers, the assistant, all moved heavily. They felt all was not right; but if they saw where the fault lay, they had not strength to remedy it.

"But it may be effectually remedied now. Without rehearsing former grievances, (which may all die, and be forgotten,) for the time to come, let each wheel keep its own place. Let the assistant, the preachers, the stewards, the leaders, know and execute their several offices. Let none encroach upon another, but all move together in harmony and love. So shall the work of God flourish among you, perhaps, as it never did before; while you all hold the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." *

Nor was Wesley less explicit respecting the *appointment* of officers in the Society. We have already seen that the assistant had the power to change at will both leaders and stewards: and the following letter on this subject was written by Wesley to Mr. John Mason, the assistant at St. Austell.

"*January* 13*th*, 1790.

"As long as I live, the people shall have no share in choosing either stewards or leaders among the Methodists. We have not, and never had, any such custom. We are no republicans, and never intend to be. It would be better for those who are so minded to go quietly away. I have

* Wesley's "Journal," vol. iii., p. 405.

been uniform, both in doctrine and discipline, for above these fifty years; and it is a little too late for me to turn into a new path now I am grey-headed." *

Local preachers, exhorters, and trustees.

The regulations respecting local preachers and exhorters during this period of Methodist history are very few. It does not appear that they had any regular meetings as at present; and for many years each one preached as he was directed by the assistant,—the earliest local preachers' plan we have heard of being dated 1777, only fourteen years before the death of Wesley. Yet we know that persons officiated in this capacity from the very beginning of Methodism. In the Conference of 1746, the following direction was given: "Let none exhort in any of our Societies, without a note of recommendation from the assistant. Let every exhorter see that this be renewed yearly. Let every assistant rigorously insist upon this." As a proof that down to the year 1770 there were no regular local preachers' plans, we find the following on the "Minutes" of that year: "That each assistant may know the exhorters in his Circuit, let each give his successor a list of them." This want had been supplied in the following years; for in 1783 the Rev. Joseph Entwisle observes, "My name was placed on the Circuit plan, and I continued to labour as a local preacher above four years. There were no printed plans in those days. The superintendent of the Circuit, or the assistant, as he was then called, when he had prepared the draught, used to employ a person to write out a copy, in a fair and legible hand, for each of the local preachers." †

During this period, there were no official regulations published respecting trustees. Great efforts had been

* Wesley's "Works," vol. xii., p. 425.

† "Memoirs of the Rev. Joseph Entwisle," p. 15.

made from time to time to get the chapels uniformly settled, and to a considerable extent this was effected before Wesley's death. The powers and responsibilities attaching to the office may be learned from a perusal of the Trust Deed which was at that time the appointed and authorized manner of settling chapels.*

Discipline in regard of preachers.

We have now to direct attention to Wesleyan discipline as respecting the preachers. And in doing this, we can think of no more effective and satisfactory mode than inviting particular attention to some extracts, which will be found in the Appendix, from the tract entitled the "Large Minutes,"† which contains "the plan of discipline as practised in the Methodist Connexion during the life of Mr. Wesley."‡ The careful reader will find in this tract perhaps the most faithful embodiment of the spirit and mind of Wesley which remains in the world. Its intense condemnation of

* See Appendix K, at the end of this volume.

† The mention of this tract affords a suitable opportunity for clearing up a difficulty which was suggested in a preceding chapter. (Page 210, *note*.) There can be little doubt that the "Disciplinary Minutes" there referred to were not republished, because Wesley saw occasion, from time to time, to make various alterations in his arrangements; and to add such additional advices, exhortations, and regulations as the progress of the work required. Instead, therefore, of reprinting the "Disciplinary Minutes" of the early Conferences, many of which, however valuable as historical records, had ceased to be applicable as rules of discipline, in consequence of the progressive developement of the Societies, he at different times collected what he regarded as the most essential disciplinary directions, and published them for the use of his people. And as this compilation was much larger than the "Minutes" of any single year, it acquired the appellation of the "Large Minutes." A comparison of the several editions of this tract affords a curious and instructive illustration of the progress of the work of God, which our limits prevent our exhibiting. The extracts given in Appendix M are from a reprint of the edition of 1791, the year of Wesley's death, collated by the Rev. Thomas Jackson with the edition of 1789.

‡ WESLEY'S "Works," vol. viii., p. 287, *note*.

sin, and all its accessories; its earnest plea for truth and practical godliness; its vivid portraiture of the duties and responsibilities of a Christian minister; and its wise and pious directions for individual conduct, and for promoting the work of God; all stand out with great prominence. And it was under the influence of these godly counsels that the preachers of Wesley's days were trained up to act and to live. These were the precepts and this the practice, illustrated and enforced by the example and energy of their chief, that constituted the instruction and discipline under which the Methodist preachers were enabled to preach the Gospel through the length and breadth of these lands with unexampled success.

Their itinerancy established.

From the first appointment of preachers as helpers, he assigned to each a certain sphere of labour for a given time, and then changed them to other places. When Circuits had been formed, the preachers were appointed for one year, and then generally removed to another place; although occasionally the same preacher was appointed two successive years in the same Circuit. He seldom went beyond that. On one or two occasions, to remove the apprehensions of trustees, Wesley consented to the insertion of a clause in trust deeds, that no preacher should be appointed to the chapel more than two years successively; and by the eleventh clause of the "Deed Poll," he made three years the longest time that any preacher could be continuously appointed to the same chapel, unless he were an ordained clergyman of the Church of England.

Objections to the absolute power of Wesley.

Serious objections were made at the time, and have often been urged since, that the supreme power rested in Wesley alone; that everything in all the Societies depended on his will; that preachers, stewards, leaders, people, all held their office, and even their membership, on this sole tenure.

To a considerable extent this was the case; and he was not disposed to deny or disguise the fact. "What is this power?" he says. "It is a power of admitting into, and excluding from, the Societies under my care; of choosing and removing stewards; of receiving or not receiving helpers; of appointing them when, where, and how to help me; and of desiring any of them to confer with me when I see good. And as it was merely in obedience to the providence of God, and for the good of the people, that I at first accepted this power, which I never sought; so it is on the same consideration, not for profit, honour, or pleasure, that I use it at this day."*

When, therefore, the power which Wesley exercised is objected to, we are bound to take two things into consideration. First, the reason for which he held it. He assures us that it was not for his own profit, honour, or pleasure, but in obedience to the providence of God, and for the good of the people. It might be fairly urged, that the solemn assertion of a minister of such a high character ought to be received with all respect, and regarded as conclusive. But, secondly, the manner in which this power was exercised, may be taken as affording abundant proof of the truth of this assertion. Wesley, we are told, was the absolute ruler over his preachers and people for fifty years; and yet, what man was ever beloved so much as he was? It is notorious, that the respect and affection with which he was regarded by the Methodist ministers and people, were beyond all example. It is admitted, that he had frequently to act with decision, and sometimes with severity: but, in judging of his conduct, reference must be had to the *materials* he had to use, and the important purposes which had to be effected. Not only had he the people to govern

* WESLEY'S "Works," vol. viii., p. 300.

and guide, and train up as an orderly religious community; he had to obtain leaders, stewards, and preachers from among his converts; and he frequently and deeply deplored the scarcity of suitable men. In a letter to one of his assistants, in which he declines to comply with a request for another preacher, he says, "You know, we have no preachers to spare, every one is employed; and we can neither make preachers nor purchase them. God alone can thrust them out into His harvest." Yet, in two months afterward, he had to write to the same preacher in these terms: "My dear brother, you fear where no fear is. I have appointed Mr. Blair to labour with you at Cork and Bandon; and shall not alter that appointment without stronger reasons than I am likely to see.—Robert Blake may go just where he will; I have nothing to do with him. Three times he left his Circuit without the consent of his assistant. He has stupidly and saucily affronted almost all the leaders. His high spirit, I fear, will destroy him. Till he is deeply humbled, I disclaim all fellowship with him." Yet, in six weeks afterward, Wesley said, "I have hope, that Robert Blake will be more useful than ever."* The constant occurrence of such circumstances, requiring immediate decision, rendered the government of the body by one able, energetic, comprehensive mind, essential to success. It would be as reasonable to suppose, that the conquests of Alexander would have been achieved by a body of Greek commissioners, or that the empire of Napoleon could have been reared up by the French Directory, as to believe that any mixed committee of preachers and laymen could have made Methodism what it was made in the lifetime of Wesley.

Still, it was urged at that time, and it is still argued,

* Wesley's "Works," vol. xii., pp. 12, 13.

that no one man ought to exercise such absolute power over the Church of Christ. As a general principle, we are quite disposed to admit this assertion; and, what is more, we believe Wesley also would have fully admitted it. He did not regard the Methodist Societies of his day as a Church. The language he invariably held was, "I am of no sect but the Church of England." * It is notorious, that these Societies lacked essential elements of Church power and privilege. Wesley regarded himself, and his work, and his people, as the result of an extraordinary providential call and interposition. He accordingly followed the openings presented to him, and conscientiously did the best he could in all emergencies. Strange, therefore, as the assertion may at first sight seem, it is certain that we cannot judge of Wesley's views of Church government, nor even of his most mature opinions respecting the direction of such a religious community as he ultimately saw the Methodist Societies were destined to become, from his conduct towards them for the greater part of his life. And for this simple reason,—that he regarded the rise and progress of Methodism as an extraordinary providential appointment, altogether beyond the common range of ecclesiastical proceedings.

The Methodism of this period not a Church.

Hence, when we find him entering into close consultation with friendly clergymen respecting Methodist worship and operations, it must not be concluded that he would regard such a measure as judicious at the present time. Nor must it be supposed, that because he occasionally invited not only those whom he called lay preachers, but even local preachers, leaders, and stewards, to meet him in Conference, such a usage is, on this account, to be regarded as having received his sanction, and as being recommended to perpetual observance. Wesley, during the first decade

Nor Wesley's arrangements to be regarded as exhibiting his mature views of Methodist polity.

* Wesley's "Works," vol. xii., p. 405.

of Methodist history, was himself what the Conference is now; and the relation of the Conferences which were then held to himself, very closely resembled in certain respects the position of the preliminary committees which are now held annually with respect to the present Conferences.

The founder of Methodism, throughout his whole career, was bent on one great object,—to save souls from death, by spreading scriptural holiness throughout the land. In doing this, he exerted himself to the uttermost to keep his people as near the Church as possible. But the salvation of men was his special object: hence he would say, "Church or no Church, we must save as many sinners as we can." All his disciplinary arrangements were directed to this end, and were a continual series of provisions for circumstances as they arose. So little, indeed, are the measures of Wesley, throughout the greater part of his life, to be taken as exhibiting his final views as to the permanent government of Methodism, that we find him in 1773 regarding as indispensable a leading principle of government, the very opposite of that which he afterwards adopted. At that time, when he hoped to secure the Rev. John Fletcher, of Madeley, as his successor in the government of the Methodist Societies, he wrote it as his deliberate judgment, that when he was removed by death, some one minister should be invested with supreme (though we should not be warranted in saying, absolute) power in his stead.

But it may be asked, "If we are not to judge of Wesley's views of the government of Methodism from the manner in which he himself governed, by what means are we to ascertain his opinions on this subject?" The answer is simple and full: We are not to judge from the various measures which he adopted through a long life of pre-

liminary labour; but from the means which, when his judgment was perfectly informed and matured, he devised and brought into operation, for the permanent government of the body after his death.

These views afterward greatly modified.

After having written the letter to Mr. Fletcher, Wesley went on with the great work. That eminent minister was removed, and the founder of Methodism had to look for other means of carrying on the work after he should himself be taken away. He accordingly proceeded, with an increasingly defined and settled purpose, to carry out the plan which seemed providentially opened before him, and to exercise his power through the Conference, as he says, "to avoid ostentation, and gently to habituate the people to obey them." This was done gradually, and with great judgment and success. For many years he devolved almost the whole of the legislative and executive power on this body, until he had trained the Conference to direct the affairs of the Connexion with wisdom, and had taught the people to submit with pious unanimity to their direction. At length he executed the Deed of Declaration, and assigned over in perpetuity his power to the whole body of the Methodist preachers.

Wesley's final views as to Methodist government and polity.

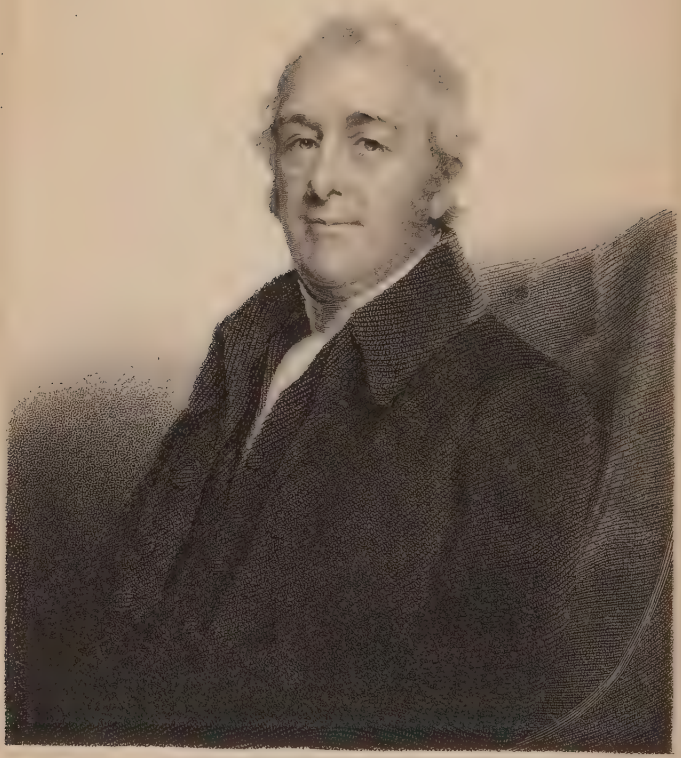
In this important action, Wesley affirmed two great principles, as lying at the foundation of all Wesleyan legislation and polity: First, the recognition of the ministry as the highest ruling element in the Church: secondly, the equality or Christian brotherhood of Christian ministers.

Possessing a legal life-estate in the chapels, Wesley held the power of appointing preachers during his life; and, "as donor of the several chapels" to trustees after his death, he had the right of constituting the authority that should succeed to this power. He might, had he been so

disposed, have continued the practice of inviting laymen to the Conference, and, omitting the tenth clause of the Deed of Declaration,* provided that a certain number of lay members should be regularly elected. He did the very reverse. After forty years of a close and careful following of the leadings of Providence in the government of the Societies, he constituted the preachers, and the preachers only, the supreme court of legislation and appeal in the Methodist Societies. It is not necessary here to show the scriptural and reasonable character of this proceeding. In the next volume, when discussing a violent aggression on the exercise of ministerial authority, something of this kind may be necessary.

This measure placed the Methodist preachers on a footing of common equality; for, notwithstanding that one hundred names were selected to form the first Conference, and that this continues to be the number even in the present enlarged state of the Connexion, it has been evident, from the beginning, that this was only a legal necessity. It was not intended to divide the Methodist preachers into two classes or grades, (as is evident from Wesley's letter written to the Conference a little before his death, and which is given at length in Appendix I,) nor has this measure had such an effect. The highest honour to which a Methodist preacher can attain, is to be "*the first among brethren.*" The idea which Wesley expressed in his letter to Fletcher, was entirely abandoned by the Deed of Declaration; and Methodist discipline was defined and consolidated by that act of Wesley, as the establishment of ministerial rule in Methodism. We doubt if there be another case on record in which any man exercised so much power over so large a number of persons voluntarily

* See Appendix I, at the end of this volume.



associated together for so long a time, and then died the object of such intense affection and universal respect. No higher proof can be given that he possessed in an eminent degree maturity of judgment and sanctity of temper.

Illustrative anecdote of Wesley.

An anecdote illustrative of this was related to the author by the late Rev. Henry Moore, not long before that venerable minister's death. It is given as nearly as possible in his own words. "Mr. Wesley, Sir," he said, "was a very great man, and a very good man. He saw through a subject or case at once, and, having formed his opinion, it was no easy task for any one to induce him to alter it. But," said he, with great satisfaction, "I did so on one occasion. It was when I was superintendent of the London Circuit, and Mr. Wesley resided at City Road. He was absent from town, on one of his journeys, when I heard that one of our wealthy members was in the habit of attending theatres. I called on him, and he told me it was so; that he had two daughters who were entitled, by their position in society, to such indulgence; that they were not religious, and wished to attend such amusements; and that, as he had no male friend to accompany them, he did so himself. I endeavoured," said Mr. Moore, "to convince him that this was very wrong, but in vain: so I told him that he must regard himself as suspended from membership; and that he might, if he pleased, refer the matter to Mr. Wesley. He said, he certainly should do so, and we parted. Thus the case stood. Mr. Wesley returned to town on a Saturday, and I preached at City Road on the Sunday morning, and after the sermon announced that Mr. Wesley would administer the sacrament after the service; and that, if persons not members wished to communicate, they must apply to him in the vestry. When I left the pulpit, I went to him, and found, after he had given some notes, that he had one

before him on which was written the name of the gentleman referred to above, whom I had suspended. Putting my finger on it, I asked if he meant to give that note, he said, 'Yes.' I replied, that I thought he ought first to hear my statement of the case: he observed he could hear that afterward, and took up the note. I then said, 'Sir, if you give that gentleman a note of admission, I will not meet him at the Lord's table.' Upon this Mr. Wesley, who had hitherto treated the subject as of no great consequence, rose up, and, looking seriously at me, said, 'Brother Moore, I would not be kept from the Lord's table this morning, if I was sure to meet the devil there.' 'Nor would I, Sir,' I replied; 'but I would not go to the Lord's table to meet the devil, if Mr. Wesley had given him a note of admission: that alters the case.' 'Yes, Brother Moore,' said Wesley, smiling, 'it does alter the case: we will talk of this matter another time:' so, tearing the note, he dropped it on the floor, and," added the venerable minister, with sparkling eyes, "we went happily in together to the sacramental service."

CHAPTER IV.

WESLEYAN LITERATURE.

Circumstances which called for Wesleyan publications.

ALTHOUGH the Methodist people have not been very generally regarded as eminent for learning, we shall find ample and interesting materials for a chapter on Wesleyan Literature.

The evangelical labours of Wesley and his coadjutors were directed not simply to those who needed the Gospel, but to those who, according to his own expressive language, "needed it most,"—to the profligate, the ignorant, the abandoned. As these were reclaimed from the error of their ways, they required not merely religious ordinances, but also instruction and information. No libel ever uttered respecting the founder of Methodism is more palpably false, than that "he accomplished his ends through the ignorance of his followers." No man of his day laboured so assiduously to promote the diffusion of knowledge, by preaching, and also by the press.

His first attention was directed to the spread of a sound theology. Bred at Oxford, with access to all the religious literature of the day, he was indebted to the *vivâ voce* communications of German teachers for clear views of the faith by which justification is obtained, and of the spiritual privileges which are imparted to believing souls. Nothing, therefore, was more natural than that, on beginning to declare abroad the whole counsel of God for the salvation of men, he should publish his opinions of those doctrines,

for the instruction of those who were led to inquire after the truth; and to afford a means to believers of defending themselves against the assaults of their spiritual adversary, and the opposition of mistaken men.

The promptitude and energy with which he entered on this work are remarkable. He was brought into "the liberty of the children of God" on the 24th of May: on the 18th of the following month, he preached a sermon before the University of Oxford, (Eph. ii. 8,) which he called "Salvation by Faith." In this discourse, he fully exhibited the faith by which he had been saved, and the nature of the salvation which he had obtained. And this sermon he published; thus beginning to make known the truth which he had so blessedly realized.

Wesley's 'Sermons.'

Before we proceed to speak of the publication of his sermons generally, we should allow him to give his own account of the manner of their composition. "To candid, reasonable men I am not afraid to lay open what have been the inmost thoughts of my heart. I have thought, I am a creature of a day, passing through life as an arrow through the air. I am a spirit come from God, and returning to God: just hovering over the great gulf; till, a few moments hence, I am no more seen; I drop into an unchangeable eternity! I want to know one thing.—the way to heaven; how to land safe on that happy shore. God Himself has condescended to teach the way; for this very end He came from heaven. He hath written it down in a book. O, give me that book! at any price give me the book of God! I have it: here is knowledge enough for me. Let me be *homo unius libri*," ("a man of one book.") "Here, then, I am, far from the busy ways of men. I sit down alone; only God is here. In His presence I open, I read His book; for this end, to find the way to heaven. Is there a doubt

concerning the meaning of what I read? Does anything appear dark or intricate? I lift up my heart to the Father of Lights: 'Lord, is it not Thy word, "If any man lack wisdom, let him ask of God?" Thou "givest liberally and upbraidest not." Thou hast said, "If any be willing to do Thy will, he shall know." I am willing to do, let me know, Thy will.' I then search after and consider parallel passages of Scripture, 'comparing spiritual things with spiritual.' I meditate thereon with all the attention and earnestness of which my mind is capable. If any doubt still remains, I consult those who are experienced in the things of God; and then the writings whereby, being dead, they yet speak. And what I thus learn, that I teach. I have accordingly set down in the following sermons what I find in the Bible concerning the way to heaven; with a view to distinguish this way of God from all those which are the inventions of men. I have endeavoured to describe the true, the scriptural, experimental religion, so as to omit nothing which is a real part thereof, and to add nothing thereto which is not." *

With this statement before us, we can scarcely subject these discourses to the ordinary ordeal of literary criticism. They were not written as didactic works are usually composed, but with the convictions described in the preceding extract. These sermons are, however, what any pious and sensible person would be led to expect under the circumstances. A very competent judge speaks of them thus: "His first four volumes in particular give us a view of (what St. Paul calls) the analogy of faith. They are written with great energy; and, as much as possible, in the very words of the inspired writers. He was fully of Luther's mind, who declared, that divinity was nothing

* Wesley's "Works," vol. v., Preface.

else than a grammar of the language of the Holy Ghost. His other sermons were written occasionally: the last four volumes (which he wrote for his 'Magazine') have been much admired, even by those who were not much disposed to relish his doctrines in general. They certainly contain abundance of information; and are written not only with his usual strength, but with more than usual elegance." *

The sermons now published as Wesley's are one hundred and forty-one in number, and consist of five series, which are at present contained in three duodecimo volumes. The first series of fifty-three discourses was completed in four volumes in 1771. These, together with Wesley's "Notes on the New Testament," are the standards of Wesleyan Methodist theology, and are referred to as such in the trust deeds of the chapels. They are eminently theological and didactic, ranging over all the important doctrines, privileges, and duties of Christianity. The second series consists of fifty-five sermons, most of which were first inserted by Wesley in the "Arminian Magazine," and afterwards revised and published in four volumes, in the year 1788. In the preface to this publication, he alludes to remarks which had been made as to the "plainness of his style;" and in reply to these observes, that he has adopted this manner from choice, not necessity. "I could, even now," he observes, "write as floridly and rhetorically as the admired Dr. B——, but I dare not; because I seek the honour that cometh from God only.....I dare no more write in a fine style than wear a fine coat." He afterwards adds, "God Himself has told us how to speak, both as to the matter and the manner: 'If any man speak,' in the name of God, 'let him speak as the oracles of God;' and if he would imitate any part of these above the rest, let it

* Benson's "Apology," p. 273.

be the First Epistle of St. John." This series forms a very suitable sequel to the first. The discourses treat of a great variety of important subjects, and are full of valuable information. The third series consists of eighteen sermons, which were written for insertion in the "Magazine," but were never revised by Wesley after their publication. They may be regarded as a continuation of the former series. The fourth series contains seven discourses, which were published by Wesley in a separate form, but never included by him in any collection of his sermons. The first of these was preached at Oxford, September 21st, 1735, nearly three years before Wesley's conversion, and published at the request of the hearers. The second is his sermon on "Free Grace," preached at Bristol, 1740, and soon after published, and of which Southey said, that in it Wesley "stated the case with equal force and truth." This masterly refutation of absolute predestination, so close and cogent in its logic, and at the same time so remarkable for its finished and highly wrought, yet withal masculine and overwhelming, declamatory eloquence, led to the rupture between the Wesleys and Whitefield. The others were preached on special occasions. The fifth series comprises eight sermons, which were published from Wesley's manuscripts after his death, but never, as far as can be ascertained, designed by him for publication. Most of them were written and preached before he obtained clear and correct views of the doctrines of the Gospel. The first sermon of this series deserves especial notice. It has been found in a mutilated English manuscript, and also in Latin. Dr. Adam Clarke translated the Latin copy of this sermon. The text is Isaiah i. 21: "How is the faithful city become an harlot!" and it is entitled, "True Christianity defended." It contains a faithful exposure of that

departure from the pure doctrines of Protestantism which then prevailed in the Church of England, and of that laxity of discipline and of morals which was so awfully manifest in the University of Oxford, as well as in general society. This sermon was evidently composed with a view to its being preached before the University, and appears to have been delivered on Thursday, June 18th, 1741. The Latin original is dated June, 1741. The composition and delivery of such a sermon to such a congregation must have required no small degree of pious resolution.

Wesley's Notes on the New and Old Testaments.

The next work to which reference will be made, is Wesley's "Translation of the New Testament with Notes." This is a most valuable work. The text contains many happy corrections of the authorized version, not a few of which have been adopted by Dr. Hales, Granville Sharp, Dr. G. Campbell, and other eminent scholars. The Notes form a rich treasury of pure scriptural theology. Dr. Clarke declares, they are "always judicious, accurate, spiritual, terse, and impressive, and possess the happy and rare quality of leading the reader immediately to God and his own heart." And Dr. Hales says, they are "commendable for their conciseness, and acutely pointed to the hearts and consciences of his readers."

Wesley also published "Notes on the Old Testament," which have been allowed on all hands to be meagre and unsatisfactory. The reason of this, which is not generally known, is thus stated by Dr. Adam Clarke: "Mr. Pine, the printer, having set up and printed off several sheets in a type much larger than was intended, it was found impossible to get the work within the prescribed limits of four volumes, without retrenching the notes, or cancelling what was already printed. The former measure was unfortunately adopted, and the work fell far short of the expectation of

the public. This account I had from the excellent author himself." *

Next in order we place the "Journals." This is certainly a most extraordinary work. It was published from time to time in separate parts, about six of which are comprised in the first volume of Wesley's Works as now published; the whole making twenty parts, which give all the leading particulars of his life, from his embarkation for Georgia, October, 1735, to October, 1790, a few months before his death. This work not only furnishes a general account of his journeys, labours, persecutions, and successes; it also contains his observations on passing events, current literature, and every object of interest, or circumstance of note, which during these years came under his notice. It is one of the most curious magazines of miscellaneous matter which we have in the English language. As already observed, both Wesley and his brother left behind them the best possible vindication of their character, in a full and explicit account of the manner in which they employed their time. From the work before us we can tell where Wesley was, and what he was employed about, nearly every week, and generally every day, of the fifty-five years which elapsed from 1735 to 1790. Nor is it possible, that any sketch of his character, or any analysis of his mind, can convey so vivid an idea of the man, as will be obtained by a careful perusal of a portion of this "Journal." Here we see, "as in a glass," the zealous and energetic minister, not sitting for his portraiture in an attitude of constraint, but in his usual course of life and labour, as he went up and down among men.

Wesley's "Journals." Their literary notices.

There is one feature of this work which deserves particular attention: we allude to the notices which it contains

* Dr. A. Clarke's "Commentary," General Preface, p. x.

of the current literature of the time. A vast number of books, as they were published, were thus particularly referred to by Wesley; as were also many others which had long before been regarded as standard works. These critical notices are valuable, even at the present time; and must have been much more so when he wrote. We quote two or three of these, written at widely distant periods, and not selected for their particular worth, but rather for the purpose of showing his views on very dissimilar subjects.

"From Saturday to Sunday I found my strength gradually increasing, and was able to read Turretin's 'History of the Church,' (a dry, heavy, barren treatise,) and the Life of that truly good and great man, Mr. Philip Henry. On Monday and Tuesday I read over the 'Life of Mr. Matthew Henry,'—a man not to be despised, either as a scholar or a Christian, though, I think, not equal to his father. On Wednesday I read over once again *Theologia Germanica*. O how was it that I could ever so admire the affected obscurity of this unscriptural writer? Glory be to God, that I now prefer the plain Apostles and Prophets before him and all his mystic followers!"

"I read again, with great surprise, part of the 'Ecclesiastical History of Eusebius;' but so weak, credulous, throughly injudicious a writer have I seldom found. I began Mr. Laval's 'History of the Reformed Churches in France;' full of the most amazing instances of the wickedness of men, and of the goodness and power of God."

"By reflecting on an odd book which I had read in this journey, 'The General Delusion of Christians with regard to Prophecy,' I was fully convinced of what I had long suspected: 1. That the Montanists, in the second and third centuries, were real, scriptural Christians; and, 2. That the grand reason why the miraculous gifts were so

soon withdrawn, was not only that faith and holiness were well-nigh lost; but that dry, formal, orthodox men began even then to ridicule whatever gifts they had not themselves; and to decry them all, as either madness or imposture."

"I read the general plan of Monsieur Gabalin's vast work, designed to consist of twelve very large quarto volumes; eight of which are published:—'The Primitive World analysed, and compared with the Modern.' He is a man of strong understanding, boundless imagination, and amazing industry. I think his first volume is a beautiful castle in the air. I admire it; but I do not believe one word of it, because it is wholly built on the authority of Sanchoniathon, whom no one could ever yet prove to have had a being. And I fear he was a Deist: 1. Because he nowhere lays the least stress upon the Bible: 2. Because he supposes the original confusion of tongues to have been a merely natural event."

"Here I had leisure, on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday, to consider throughly the account of the Pelew Islands. It is ingenious; but I esteem it a dangerous book, which I cannot believe, if I believe the Bible: for the direct tendency of it is to show that the Bible is quite needless; since, if men may be as virtuous without revelation as with it, then it is quite superfluous; then the fable of Jesus Christ, and that of Mahomet, are equally valuable. I do not say Mr. Keate, much less Captain Wilson, designed to inculcate this consequence; but it necessarily follows, if you believe the premises. I cannot believe there is such a heathen on earth as Abba Thulle; much less such a heathen nation as are here painted.

"'But what do you think of Prince Lee Boo?' I think he was a good-natured, sensible young man, who came to

England with Captain Wilson, and had learned his lesson well; but was just as much a prince as Tomo Chachi was a king."

"I made an end of that curious book, Dr. Parson's 'Remains of Japheth.' The very ingenious author has struck much light into some of the darkest parts of ancient history; and although I cannot entirely subscribe to every proposition which he advances, yet I apprehend he has sufficiently proved the main of his hypothesis; namely,—

"1. That after the Flood, Shem and his descendants peopled the greatest part of Asia. 2. That Ham and his children peopled Africa. 3. That Europe was peopled by the two sons of Japheth, Gomer and Magog: the southern and south-western by Gomer and his children; and the north and the north-western by the children of Magog. 4. That the former were called Gomerians, Cimmerians, Cimbrians; and afterwards Celtiæ, Galatæ, and Gauls: the latter were called by the general name of Scythians, Scuiti, Scots. 5. That the Gomerians spread swiftly through the north of Europe, as far as the Cimbrian Chersonesus, (including Sweden, Denmark, Norway, and divers other countries,) and then into Ireland, where they multiplied very early into a considerable nation. 6. That some ages after, another part of them who had first settled in Spain, sailed to Ireland, under Milea, or Milesius; and, conquering the first inhabitants, took possession of the land. 7. That about the same time the Gomerians came to Ireland, the Magogians or Scythians came to Britain; so early that both still spoke the same language, and well understood each other. 8. That the Irish spoke by the Gomerians, and the Welsh spoke by the Magogians, are one and the same language, expressed by the same seventeen letters, which were long after brought by a Gomerian prince into

Greece. 9. That all the languages of Europe, Greek and Latin in particular, are derived from this. 10. That the antediluvian language, spoken by all till after the Flood, and then continued in the family of Shem, was Hebrew; and from this (the Hebrew) tongue many of the eastern languages are derived. The foregoing particulars this fine writer has made highly probable. And these may be admitted; though we do not agree to his vehement panegyric on the Irish language, much less receive all the stories told by the Irish poets, or chroniclers, as genuine, authentic history."

When it is considered that the few sentences forming the last extract contain an analysis of a large quarto volume written on an obscure and extensive subject, and that it was composed when Wesley was in his seventy-ninth year, and pressingly occupied with the care of his numerous Societies, it must be admitted as a striking proof of his great strength of mind, uncommon sagacity, and indomitable spirit of inquiry.

The copiousness of the "Journals."

But the most singular feature in these "Journals" is their copiousness. What we have in print, are extracts selected by himself, and we have reason to believe very scanty extracts, from the full account of his daily proceedings which he appears to have written. We happen to be able, in one instance, to verify this opinion. We have before us, in the handwriting of Robert Swindells, one of the early preachers, a copy made by him of a small part of a "Journal" at length, which copy was corrected and completed by Wesley's own hand. We will give a portion of this fragment, in comparison with the published extract. The latter is as follows: "Monday, May 1, (1749.) I preached at five in the evening at Edinderry, to an exceedingly well-behaved congregation. I preached at five in

the morning, (many Quakers being present,) on, 'They shall be all taught of God.' In the evening I preached at Mount-Melick. Wednesday, 3. I preached at Tullamore."

Mr. Swindells' transcript of the "Journal" at large reads thus: "In the afternoon I rode to Edinderry, and met the leaders of Society; at five I preached to an exceedingly well-behaved congregation. Many of them were Quakers. I spoke a few words concerning John Curtis, at which they seemed not a little amazed. Several of them afterwards desired to be present at the meeting of the Society. I was glad they did; for the power of God was upon us in an uncommon manner. And much more in the morning, (Tuesday, 2,) while I was explaining, 'Ye shall be all taught of God.' One of the Quakers now invited us to his house, and was quite loving and open-hearted. In returning from thence to the town, I fixed my eyes on a venerable, grey-headed man walking along, who immediately stopped as one in amaze, and said, 'Friend, dost thou know me?' I spoke a few words, the tears started into his eyes, and he dismissed me with a hearty blessing. Our brethren who came behind met him with the tears running down his cheeks. O, why should we lose a moment?

"I sent brother Swindells from hence to Killucan, seven or eight miles north-east of Tyrrel's Pass, at the earnest request of a gentleman who came thence on purpose to desire a preacher might be sent thither. Two of the brethren who came the night before to meet me, rode with me to Mount-Melick; where is now the largest Society we have in Ireland, next to those of Dublin and Cork. Being informed that the Quakers in general, as well here as in Cork, Athlone, and Edinderry, had left the preaching from

the time of John Curtis' coming, I took occasion before I preached to mention here, also, the real state of the case between us, but with the utmost caution and tenderness. An hour or two afterward James Gough, the speaker, with two more of his friends, came to expostulate with me on the head. James laboured hard to persuade me that I was misinformed, and that John Curtis had neither directly, nor indirectly, said one word against the Methodists."

If this portion of the "Journal" is any sample of the relation which the published part bears to the original MS.,—and we know no reason why it should not be so regarded,—then the published extracts are not only a very brief, but a very modest, selection from what Wesley originally wrote. So far from the printed portion here being highly coloured, the most glowing and cheering parts are suppressed.

Wesley's "Appeals."

Wesley's "Appeals" form another important section of his works. These are similar in character and object to the "Apologies" of the ancient Christians; and, for the ability with which they were composed, and the spirit which they breathe, will bear an honourable comparison with any of them. "They are indeed masterly productions. They were written in the fulness of his heart: while beholding *the world lying in the wicked one, he wept over it.* One may almost venture to assert, that no unprejudiced person can read them without feeling their force, and acknowledging their justness. It is certain they have convinced many persons who were deeply prejudiced; and those, too, of considerable learning. It has been remarked, that those who truly preach the Gospel, do it with *a flaming tongue.* I may make a similar remark respecting these 'Appeals.' The flame, the power, and yet the sobriety of

love, are highly manifest in them. I cannot but earnestly recommend them to all, who desire to know *what spirit he was of*, while contending against almost the whole world; and whether it really was for the truth of God he so contended." * The first of these pieces, entitled, "An earnest Appeal to Men of Reason and Religion," was written in 1744. This was followed by "A farther Appeal to Men of Reason and Religion," in three parts. The first part was published in December, 1744; the last in December, 1745.

Wesley's other publications.

A brief notice of Wesley's other works must suffice. His masterly treatise on original sin, in reply to Dr. Taylor, of Norwich, that able writer could never be induced to answer, as he did all his other opponents. Wesley not only entered into the controversy on absolute predestination, and produced many very valuable pieces, which were published separately; but, in 1778, he began a monthly magazine, principally for the purpose of asserting and defending the doctrines of general redemption, which he continued to the end of his life. He also wrote a Church History, in four volumes; a History of England, in four volumes; a Compendium of Natural Philosophy, giving all the discoveries made in the science to that period, in four volumes; a Dictionary of the English Language;† separate

* Rev. Joseph Benson.

† We give the curious and witty preface to this work, which deserves to be more extensively known. It is as follows:—

"TO THE READER.

"As incredible as it may appear, I must avow, that this Dictionary is not published to get money; but to assist persons of common sense, and no learning, to understand the best English authors; and that with as little expense of either time or money as the nature of the thing will allow.

"To this end, it contains, not a heap of Greek and Latin words, just

grammars of the English, French, Latin, Greek, and Hebrew languages; a Compendium of Logic, &c., &c. The reader who would form an approximate idea of the literary labours of Wesley, must consider that, besides his original prose works, which fill fourteen closely printed volumes, his commentaries, compilations, and abridgments form a list of one hundred and nineteen publications in prose; exclusive of fifty-two separate works in poetry, the joint productions

tagged with English terminations; (for no good English writer, none but vain and senseless pedants, give these any place in their writings;) not a scroll of barbarous law expressions, which are neither Greek, Latin, nor good English; not a crowd of technical terms, the meaning whereof is to be sought in books expressly wrote on the subjects to which they belong; not such English words as 'and,' 'of,' 'but,' which stand so gravely in Mr. Bailey's, Pardon's, and Martin's Dictionaries; but 'most of those hard words which are found in the best English writers.' I say 'most;' for I purposely omit, not only all that are not hard, and which are not found in the best writers; not only all law words, and most technical terms; but likewise all the meaning of which may be easily gathered from those of the same derivation. And this I have done, in order to make this Dictionary both as short and cheap as possible.

"I should add no more, but that I have so often observed, the only way, according to the modern taste, for any author to procure commendation to his book, is, vehemently to commend it himself. For want of this deference to the public, several excellent tracts, lately printed, but left to commend themselves by their intrinsic worth, are utterly unknown or forgotten: whereas, if a writer of tolerable sense will but bestow a few violent encomiums on his own work; especially, if they are skilfully ranged in the title-page; it will pass through six editions in a trice: the world being too complaisant to give a gentleman the lie; and taking it for granted, he understands his own performance best.

"In compliance, therefore, with the taste of the age, I add, that this little Dictionary is not only the shortest and cheapest, but likewise, by many degrees, the most correct, which is extant at this day. Many are the mistakes in all the other English Dictionaries which I have yet seen: whereas, I can truly say, I know of none in this: and I conceive the reader will believe me; for if I had, I should not have left it there. Use, then, this help, till you find a better."—WESLEY'S "Works," vol. xiv., pp. 223, 224.

of Wesley and his brother; and, lastly, five publications on music, and collections of tunes.*

"Christian Library."

Although some of these works were compilations, and many others abridgments, their publication rendered invaluable service to the religious literature of his day. The principal compilation was published under the title of "A Christian Library: consisting of Extracts from, and Abridgments of, the choicest Pieces of practical Divinity in the English Tongue. In fifty Volumes." Let this be observed in estimating the extent of Wesley's publications. Here, in a series of one hundred and seventy-two publications, we find one of the number containing fifty volumes! This was, indeed, the largest work which he published; yet some of the others embraced not a few volumes. The origin and design of this work deserve special notice.

Wesley had not been long engaged in his evangelical labours before he perceived that the wide diffusion of religious knowledge among the people necessarily made a demand for corresponding progress on the part of his preachers. He, therefore, began to think of a collection of such books in the English language, treating on the various parts of practical divinity, as might forward their improvement, and might also instruct and edify any Christian persons who could purchase and peruse them. And because in all probability he felt conscious that the plan of his own education, and the prejudices he had early imbibed against the Nonconformists of the last century, had shut him out from the knowledge of many writings which might be very useful on this occasion, and of the benefit to be derived from which he was not at all disposed to deprive his readers, he applied to Dr. Doddridge, with

* See Appendix N, at the end of this volume.

whom he had a friendly correspondence, and obtained from him a list of such books as he might think suitable to promote the improvement of young preachers. Having secured this aid, he proceeded to form his "Christian Library." To do this, he selected and abridged the works of the wisest and most pious men since the days of the apostles. He began with the Epistles and other writings of the apostolic fathers, Ignatius, Polycarp, Clemens Romanus, &c. He waded through a prodigious number of books on practical and experimental religion, in regular succession, according to the times when they were written; and at length completed a work of fifty volumes.*

When it is considered that he reduced many folios and quartos to the compass of a pocket volume; that he did this in the midst of such continual labour and travel, as would, of itself, be regarded sufficient to wear out the most robust of mankind; that he abridged some of these volumes on horseback, and others at inns, or houses where he stayed but a few days or hours; his industry and perseverance appear astonishing.

Nor must we undervalue the importance of these abridgments. In many instances they afforded the only means of giving hitherto unreadable masses of learning and piety to the reading world. Another important element of usefulness was imparted by Wesley to these condensed reprints.

* It has been commonly believed that Mr. Wesley sustained considerable loss by the "Christian Library;" and the following announcement, which appeared on the cover of successive numbers of the Magazine in 1784, puts it beyond doubt:—

"A friendly Correspondent desires me to reprint the fifty volumes of the 'Christian Library.' I lost above a hundred pounds by it before: and I cannot well afford to lose another hundred.

"*Nov.* 12*th*, 1783. JOHN WESLEY."

Communicated by the REV. JOHN KIRK.

He generally wrote a preface to every piece; and many of these not only are rich in meaning and racy in style, but form a valuable key to the meaning of the author. A few brief sentences, showing the character, circumstances, and object of the author, and the nature and design of the work, sometimes afford invaluable aid to the young student.

Epistolary correspondence. Wesleyan poetry.

Nor must we altogether overlook Wesley's letters. His epistolary correspondence was immense; the number of his letters which have been published is very great, and they are very important in the amount of information they contain. Addressed to persons in all classes and ranks of life, they are a curious commentary on the principal events of the times, and afford the most diversified information on a vast variety of subjects. But, above all, they are a wonderful magazine of religious instruction. As they are, to a great extent, replies to persons seeking Christian aid or counsel, or to his preachers when in peculiar and trying circumstances, they furnish important information respecting Christian privilege and experience, and exhibit the trials and dangers amid which Methodism arose to influence and power, as well as the wisdom and piety which were granted to its founder in the difficulties and perplexities which encompassed him.

Our limits will allow a particular notice of but one other branch of Wesleyan literature; and that is, of course, its poetry. In this department of the work Charles Wesley was the leading mind. When the reader passes his eye over the list of fifty-one several poetical publications, original and selected, some of which even in the lifetime of the Wesleys passed through more than twenty editions, he will have some idea of the extent to which the soul-elevating power of poetry was brought to bear on the

population of the country by the instrumentality of the Wesleys. And it must not be forgotten that it was poetry of a very high order. The selected pieces were from Milton, Young, and others of the most eminent poets who have adorned our country. But it is still more important to observe, that all this poetry was not only free from everything of a vicious tendency, but sacredly devoted to the cause of sound morals and sterling religion. Unfortunately, in every age there have been men of genius and mental power whose perverted minds have been led to invest the foulest immoralities, and the most impious tenets, with all the charms of sweetest song, and all the living energy of poetic fire. Such men lived and wrote in the days of Wesley. He and his brother nobly laboured to counteract the influence of their mischievous productions, by sowing broadcast over the land innumerable pieces equally rich in talent, pathos, power, and every quality adapted to arrest the attention and influence the mind, and at the same time fully charged with moral truth and evangelical piety.

he Hymn Book. Its great excellence and importance.

But it is to Wesleyan poetry as the psalmody of the Methodist Connexion and its various offshoots, that we attach the greatest importance. The Wesleyan Hymn Book is unquestionably one of the most remarkable and effective agents with which the world has been favoured in modern times, for the purpose of preserving the great doctrines of Scripture from adulteration and decay, and keeping prominently before the people the glorious verities of the spiritual life which the Gospel reveals. This is no empty sectarian praise. It is justified by the most careful investigation of the volume, the most minute acquaintance with its contents.

Let those who doubt, carefully study these hymns. They

will find here all the great doctrines of scriptural Christianity, not only clearly and distinctly asserted, but beautifully illustrated, explained, and enforced. More than this. These doctrines are exhibited as embodied in the godly experience, the fears and hopes, the joys and sorrows, the trials, conflicts, and triumphs of Christian people. This subject has been treated very ably, and more fully than our limits allow, by the Rev. Thomas Jackson, in his "Life of the Rev. Charles Wesley," and also by other writers on Wesleyan hymnology. Never since the sweet singer of Israel, under the immediate inspiration of the Spirit of God, composed his Psalms for the service of the tabernacle on Mount Zion, where he and his devout associates worshipped before the ark and Shekinah, has the Church had such a glorious union of sterling scriptural truth, genuine godly feeling, and sweet, smooth, and powerful language, according to the nature of the subject, as is found in the Wesleyan Hymn Book.*

* We believe that very few persons are aware of the original mode of publishing this inestimable book. The following is the Prospectus, as it appeared on the cover of the Magazine for October, 1779:—

"PROPOSALS FOR PRINTING

(BY SUBSCRIPTION)

A

COLLECTION

OF

HYMNS,

FOR THE USE OF THE PEOPLE CALLED

METHODISTS.

Intended to be used in all their Congregations.

"CONDITIONS.

"I. This Collection will contain about Five Hundred Hymns, and upwards of Four Hundred Pages.

"II. It is now nearly ready for the Press; and will be printed with all Expedition.

Musical publications.

Wesley was as careful of the manner in which his hymns were sung, as of the sentiments they contained, and the language in which they were expressed. He deprecated all fanciful and unreasonable violations of the solemn proprieties of Christian worship, by different persons singing different words at the same time, or by any other equally incongruous means. He accordingly supplied his people with a suitable and ample body of music, sufficient to meet all the requirements of their religious services. This was provided in the publication of successive series of tunes; and the way to use them was pointed out in a small production, on "the Grounds of Vocal Music."

The effect of these literary efforts on the preachers.

Wesley did not satisfy himself with writing and publishing books in every department of useful learning, and especially in explanation and defence of the great doctrines of Protestant Christianity. He used his utmost efforts to induce his people to avail themselves of these means of in-

"III. The Price is THREE SHILLINGS: Half to be paid at the Time of Subscribing; the other Half at the Delivery of the Book, *sewed*.

"IV. BOOKSELLERS *only*, Subscribing for Six copies, shall have a Seventh gratis."

These proposals will explain the following characteristic passage in a letter of Mr. Wesley's, dated Nov., 1779, to Mr. John Mason, one of his newly appointed "Assistants:"—

"One thing more I desire,—that you would read the proposals for the general Hymn Book in every Society, and procure as many subscribers as you can.

"By your diligence and exactness in these particulars, I shall judge whether you are qualified to act as an Assistant or not.

"I am

"Your affectionate Friend and Brother,

"JOHN WESLEY.

"Pray send me word in January how many subscriptions you have procured in your Circuit."—*Wesley's Works*, vol. xii., p. 438.

Communicated by the REV. JOHN KIRK.

struction. He urged on his preachers the necessity of their being *more knowing*, with all the authority and influence which his position and learning could impart; and not without success. The men taken from every section of the middle and lower classes to preach the Gospel under his direction, as a body, rose to attainments which placed them before the world in an advantageous position as Christian ministers. Some of these, indeed, attained eminence. The poetry and music of Thomas Olivers are not unworthy of a graduate of either University. Nor must it be forgotten that it was under Wesley's direction that Dr. Coke, Joseph Benson, and Adam Clarke arose into usefulness and celebrity.

The means for extending these advantages to the people.

Nor were the people overlooked in the paternal solicitude and expansive benevolence of the founder of Methodism. He published his works in a form and at a price adapted to the wants and the poverty of those usually called "the lower classes." His uniform direction to his preachers was, that they should be itinerant booksellers. They were instructed to wage an equal warfare with sin and ignorance. If Wesley was not the first, he was certainly one of the first, to introduce the practice of publishing works in parts or numbers, to meet the circumstances and supply the wants of the poor. The price usually charged was twelve pages for one penny. His preachers were instructed, as a part of their mission, "to beg money of the rich to buy books for the poor;" and were urged in every way to do their utmost to promote, by the circulation of useful and religious books, the intellectual and moral as well as the religious instruction of the masses of the people. And this glorious object, to a very great extent, they most certainly accomplished.

CHAPTER V.

WESLEYAN METHODISM A GREAT REFORMATION.

The object and aim of this work.

THE preceding pages have, in the judgment of the author, discussed matters of infinite moment to the past, present, and future welfare of the world.

The religious condition of these lands at the commencement of the eighteenth century, the origin and character of the Wesley family, and the early life of Wesley and his brother, have been carefully and honestly investigated. Wesley's course of action, from his conversion to his death, the character and conduct of his preachers, the violent opposition to which they were exposed, and the rise, progress, organization, and character of the Methodist Societies, have been faithfully narrated. The objections which have been urged against Wesley's religious character have been examined; the theology and religious agency of his Societies considered; the various elements of their discipline and government exhibited; and Wesley's disinterestedness, energy, and diligence, as an author and publisher, set forth. Indeed, no element calculated to cast light on the Methodism of Wesley's day has been, so far as we know, omitted. And we now ask, What was the Methodism of John Wesley's times? Whence did it come? Our answer is, that it was a glorious revival of scriptural religion wrought by the merciful interposition of the grace of God, principally through the instrumentality of Wesley, and under his immediate direction: in a word, it was a GREAT REFORMATION. Our concluding

pages will be devoted to the expansion and defence of this idea.

There has been a great improvement in the country from the days of Wesley.

It may place this subject more clearly before the reader, to refer first of all to the universally acknowledged fact, that, from about the period of Wesley's middle age, there has been a great and wonderful religious improvement in this country. This no person acquainted with the history of the past hundred and fifty years can possibly doubt or deny. Whence, then, did this improvement arise? From the clergy of the Establishment, or from Dissenting ministers?

It may aid us in solving these queries, to inquire who, at this time, exerted paramount influence over the public mind, and directed its thoughts in respect of religion? The infidel Lord Shaftesbury died while Wesley was a child; Dr. Samuel Clarke was removed from the Church he had poisoned with Arian error, when the founder of Methodism was a young man; and Bishops Beveridge, Bull, Cumberland, and Burnet, and Archbishops Sharp and Tenison, had also been removed from the English Church during his childhood. Nor was there a man left in the Establishment to whom, by any stretch of charity or even of imagination, any great and general revival of religion in the nation can be attributed. But there were Dissenting ministers of eminent piety and ability. This is readily admitted, but the admission does not solve the difficulty. John Howe died too early in Wesley's life to be taken into the account. Matthew Henry, Philip Doddridge, and a few others adorned the Dissenting Churches, and ministered the truth of God with great success in their respective localities; but their labours and influence did not materially affect the religious condition of the country at large. Chester, Hackney, Northampton, and some other places,

were revived and improved in their religious tone and morals; but the nation remained nearly as dark, and dead, and spiritually inert as before. There was no agency exerted on the country as a whole, no power brought into operation at all commensurate with any general religious improvement.

The absence of any other efficient agent points out Wesley and Methodism as the cause.

There were persons, indeed, contemporary with Wesley, who exerted a very salutary religious influence on the public mind: as such, we may name Whitefield, Hervey, the Countess of Huntingdon, Madan, Berridge, and Grimshaw. But several of these were converted to God under Methodist instrumentality, and all were more or less indebted to Wesley's teaching, guidance, and influence for their light and zeal, and gratefully admitted their obligation. Nor did any of them, nor, indeed, all of them united, produce such religious effects on the country as could lead to the results of which we have spoken.

The great and general revival of religion which has so happily affected our country during the last century and a half, and which is still in progress, is, therefore, under God, the fruit of Wesley's life and labours, and had its origin in, and owes its progress to, Methodism. We are not content merely to place this conclusion on record as an assertion or an opinion; but to submit it to every reasonable test, to sustain it by ample evidence, and thus to claim for it reception and credence as an established historical fact.

What constitutes a great reformation?

What, then, we ask, is regarded as sufficient to entitle any religious improvement to claim the high ascription of being a great reformation? In a country which is confessedly to a fearful extent in spiritual darkness and immorality, and where the appointed means for diffusing divine truth and promoting scriptural religion have proved lament-

ably ineffectual, we think it will be sufficient to justify such a claim, if it can be shown, that an improved agency for preaching the Gospel is introduced, adapted to make known the whole truth of God with energy and success; that this preaching is effective in the conversion of sinners, and in producing all those proofs of inward religion and outward righteousness which the word of God requires; that these happy results are spread over the whole country, cover more than a century of time, and beneficially affect all classes and all Churches; and, lastly, that by this means most of the great religious and benevolent agencies, which are the glory of modern Christianity, have been originated and brought into operation.

Let Methodism, as introduced by Wesley, be subjected to this test; let it be carefully and candidly inquired whether it has these claims to be regarded as a great religious reformation.

Methodism introduced an improved agency for preaching.

And first, as the preaching of the Gospel is the divinely appointed means of disseminating the truth of God, and of maintaining the cause of Christ, if this means cease to be efficient, then religion languishes, and its vital power wanes. The religious condition of England at the time of Wesley's conversion is thus described in the language of an eminent living minister: "We fearlessly affirm, that the age of *preaching*—preaching viewed as a divine and aggressive ordinance, a proclamation of mercy for the evangelization of man—*had died out;*" it had ceased to exist in the land.

In directing attention to the preaching introduced by Wesley, it is necessary to refer in the first place to his published sermons, as a standard proof of the doctrines which he held forth. This is done with the fullest confidence that they really contain the pure truths of the Gospel, as free

from alloy or adulteration as may be expected in passing through the human mind. These truths are not only set forth in their purity, but with discriminating judgment and effect. Stress is not here laid on the "mint, anise, and cummin," while the "weightier matters of the law" are forgotten. These sermons grapple at once with the corruption of man's state by nature, his guilt and condemnation through sin, and the means of attaining a free, full, present salvation, through faith in Jesus Christ. They contain a clear exposition of salvation, not Calvinistic on the one hand, nor Pelagian on the other. They make prominent the essential truths, privileges, and duties of the Gospel.

As to Wesley himself, his powers as a preacher are greatly underrated by the present generation. Men now form their judgment of his preaching either from his printed sermons, or from the reports of old people who remember having heard him preach shortly before his death. The first certainly afford no criterion of his actual preaching, as his object in these published sermons was to exhibit and defend the great doctrines of the Gospel in a clear and logical manner, but not as he would give them in a *vivâ voce* address to a congregation. Still less are the traditionary recollections of Wesley's preaching to be trusted; representing, as they do, reminiscences of the discourses of an old man on the brink of the grave. In the prime of his strength he possessed all the characteristics of a great preacher. He commanded the attention and respect of the learned at Oxford, and of the fashionable at Bath; while he held crowds of colliers at Newcastle and Kingswood, and the miners of Staffordshire and Cornwall, in fixed attention to his message.

Much has been said about the illiterate character of the

first Methodist preachers; and it cannot be denied that few of them were favoured with a liberal education. But it is equally certain, that they were generally men of strong minds, and always men who knew their business. They had a clear and definite object before them; they "knew the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ," and were bent on making known the glad tidings of mercy to their fellow men. When they stood up to preach, it was not to read an elegant essay, or to recite a smooth and flowing piece of oratory: it was to persuade men to break off their sins by repentance, and to obtain mercy by faith in Christ. They preached for an object, and that object they secured.

We say, then, that Methodism provided an improved agency for preaching the Gospel through the length and breadth of these lands. The substance of the discourses delivered by its preachers was the scriptural message of salvation; and their manner was earnest and effectual. If preaching be regarded as the divinely appointed means of leading men from sin to the knowledge of God and the practice of righteousness, then this preaching was a great improvement on that which preceded it.

The preaching of the Methodists was effective.

The next consideration will fairly test this conclusion; for it is alleged that this preaching was effective in the conversion of sinners, and in producing all those proofs of inward religion and outward righteousness which the word of God requires.

As to the nature of the conversion referred to, the account which has been given of that of Wesley himself may be taken as sufficient. The founder of Methodism, and his preachers generally, were thankful to witness any improvement, whether intellectual or moral, in those parties to whom they ministered; but they never regarded their mission as successful, unless they had satisfactory proof

that their hearers were brought to apprehend the great atonement, and thus to obtain "the remission of sins," and "a new birth unto righteousness." Nor did they rest satisfied with any expression of feeling or desire: the grand object they had in view was the spread of scriptural holiness; and, consequently, power over sin, the manifestation in every suitable way of love to God and love to man, were invariably insisted on, and alone regarded as proofs of success.

And their success was extensive. This is proved by the constant multiplication of members, and the steady increase of preachers, as well as by universal admission. Isaac Taylor, who makes such serious exceptions to Wesley and to Methodism, candidly admits that the latter "was a waking up of a consciousness toward Almighty God, which gave a meaning" to the most important portions of Holy Writ; that "the Methodistic proclamation of the Gospel was rendered effective by divine energy, granted at that time in a sovereign manner, and in an unwonted degree." And he further observes: "Wanting, as it was at its commencement, in almost every adventitious aid, and owing nothing to concomitant political excitements, strong solely in its evangelic energy, and in the simple purpose of its promulgators, it possessed itself of a surface outmeasuring far that which, in any properly comparable instance, Christian teachers have brought under their influence within the same compass of time." * It is therefore admitted that, as the originator of an "evangelical enterprise," Wesley stands without a rival.

And it is undeniable, that no other religious community submitted its members to so decisive a test of religious character as Wesley devised for Methodism. It did not

* Taylor's "Wesley and Methodism," p. 217.

suffice for a Methodist to be regular and moral, and to attend church and sacrament; nor to have had Methodist parents, and to have been trained up in an observance of the rules of the Society. He had to speak weekly of his religious progress and prospects, and to receive counsel and guidance from his leader; while the friendly eyes of his fellow-members carefully observed his outward conduct. In addition to all this,—as the reader of the preceding narrative will have observed,—Wesley's periodical examination of the Societies, and the oversight of his assistants, had a powerful tendency to check, as far as possible, everything of formalism or hypocrisy. Under those circumstances, the work of God in Methodism was as genuine and influential as it was extensive.

These results were spread over the whole country, and were permanent.

Nor were these happy results limited to any particular locality or period. Wesley visited every part of the land, extended his ministrations to every district, and almost every town and village, of England, Wales, Scotland, and Ireland. His preachers followed his steps, and penetrated every part of the country; and although in some quarters these efforts were crowned with more abundant success than in others, yet in no extensive district did the word fall to the ground: so that before his death he saw the Society in Great Britain and the adjoining islands number more than 71,500 members; and if to these we add the numbers on the continent of America, and in the West Indies, the gross aggregate will exceed 120,000. But the direct influence of Methodist religious action must not be limited even to this great number. The members of Society scarcely number anywhere more than one-fourth of the congregation. We accordingly find that Wesley lived to see half a million souls attend the ministrations of

Methodism; and this, too, when the population of England and Wales was under eight millions; so that probably a sixteenth part of the adult population of the British islands attended Wesleyan preaching at that time. Well might he exclaim, "What hath God wrought!"

The permanence of Methodism is, perhaps, as remarkable, all things considered, as its rapid and marvellous growth. For half a century did this devoted man pursue his labours; and although he was brought into contact with every class of mind and all ranks of people, and had to encounter every sort of external opposition, as well as very numerous and harassing defections from among his intimate friends and coadjutors, the work held on its way. Indeed, it can scarcely be said to have been checked at all: from year to year members were gathered; ministers increased in number; the losses occasioned by death or other causes were more than covered by accessions from the world; so that, like a mighty river, widening and deepening as it proceeds, Methodism continued to increase in power and influence.

It is not intended to dwell at large on the influence exerted by Methodism on the doctrines, preaching, and morals of other Churches. That both in the Established Church and among other Christian denominations there has been a very marked and, indeed, an extraordinary progress, which can be traced back to the days of Wesley, and no farther, no person at all acquainted with the religious history of our country during the last hundred years will for a moment doubt; or that every manifestation of such improvement, whether in the Church or among the Dissenters, was, at the first, stigmatized alike among the profane and the formalists by the term of "Methodism."

We have a very significant, but unintentional, proof of

this in the violent opposition of the Hon. Walter Shirley and his friends to Wesley's "Minutes" of 1770. Why did a few objectionable words in this document excite so much alarm? What was the reason that because the Methodist preachers in quiet consultation chose to express themselves in certain terms respecting some religious doctrines, numerous, influential, and elevated ministers and others should be thrown into a state of great excitement, that circular letters should be sent throughout the land, and the aid of the faithful implored from Scotland to Cornwall? Why all this? Evidently, because of the potency of Wesley's word, and of the great influence which the teaching of Methodism had even at that time acquired. And, consequently, the noble assertion of Gospel truth, the glorious protest against Antinomian error, then put forth, had a corresponding influence on the Churches of Britain and America.

Methodism brought into operation most of the agencies which distinguish the religion of the present time.

Enough has been said to prove the assertion at the head of this chapter; but we briefly add a few illustrations of the important fact, that Methodism brought into active operation most of those benevolent and religious agencies which are the glory of modern Christianity.

No events have taken place in our country since the introduction of the Gospel, which have been regarded with more pleasure and gratulation, by enlightened Englishmen, than the abolition of the infamous slave trade, in 1807, and the subsequent glorious extinction of slavery in all the dominions of the British crown. No men have earned more exalted or more durable renown, than those worthies who achieved this triumph of liberty and religion.

Anti-slavery.

Wesley entered into this struggle in its earliest period. Contemporaneously with the first efforts of Clarkson and Granville Sharp, and before Wilberforce represented the

county of York in Parliament, he published his "Thoughts upon Slavery," in which he exposed the enormous evils of this "complicated villany," as he terms it, by showing its origin, progress, cruelties, and wickednesses, and implored all men of reason and piety to put an end to this foul stain on humanity and religion. In accordance with these views, every person holding slaves was declared, by the American Conference of 1780, to be acting contrary to the laws of God and man.

Wesley displayed an equally expansive benevolence in his efforts to relieve the sick, the aged, and the poor. His own self-denial, sacrifices, and almost unbounded benevolence, are not here particularly referred to, although they deserve most honourable mention; but to the efforts which he made to imbue his Societies with the spirit and practice of charity, earnest attention is directed. As early as May, 1741, we find the following in his "Journal:" "I reminded the United Society, that many of our brethren and sisters had not needful food; many were destitute of convenient clothing; many were out of business, and that without their own fault; and many sick and ready to perish: that I had done what in me lay to feed the hungry, to clothe the naked, to employ the poor, and to visit the sick; but was not alone sufficient for these things; and therefore desired all whose hearts were as my heart,

Relief of poor and sick. Dispensaries.

"1. To bring what clothes each could spare, to be distributed among those that wanted most.

"2. To give weekly a penny, or what they could afford, for the relief of the poor and sick.

"My design, I told them, is to employ for the present all the women who are out of business, and desire it, in knitting.

"To these we will give first the common price for what work they do; and then add, according as they need.

"Twelve persons are appointed to inspect these, and to visit and provide things needful for the sick.

"Each of these is to visit all the sick within their district, every other day; and to meet on Tuesday evening, to give an account of what they have done, and consult what can be done further." *

This institution was formed for the benefit of members of the Society. But Wesley's sympathies did not terminate there: he was induced to make provision for the destitute who had no such claims on his benevolence. We find in his "Journal," a few months before his death, the following:—"Sunday, 14th, was a comfortable day. In the morning I met the Strangers' Society, instituted wholly for the relief not of our Society, but for poor, sick, friendless strangers. I do not know that I ever heard or read of such an institution till within a few years ago. So this also is one of the fruits of Methodism." †

This institution has happily been continued to our times, and obtained well-deserved distinction among the noble charities of our land. Six or eight years since, a brief sketch of the nature, rise, and progress of the Benevolent or Strangers' Friend Society was appended to the Annual Report. This institution, which has received royal patronage and support, is there commended as standing among the charities that constitute the brightest gem in the diadem of England's greatness and glory; and special mention is made of the Tract Society, the Bible Society, and a number of other similar institutions, "that have arisen from and founded themselves on this model." The Report then states, that the Society "originated with a few pious indi-

* WESLEY'S "Works," vol. i., p. 291. † *Ibid.*, vol. iv., p. 461.

viduals who were in the habit of visiting the sick for spiritual purposes, and were led 'to consider whether some plan might not be devised to afford temporal relief to the sufferers.'" A Society was then formed, and weekly contributions obtained; and it is added, that "it may not be uninteresting to state, that the celebrated Dr. Adam Clarke, with many other individuals of celebrity and piety in the metropolis, were among the most active of its promoters." All this seems very fair; but why should not the principal moving cause of the whole business have been named? Dr. Clarke has himself placed the true origin of the Society on record in terms worthy of himself, and of his patron and friend. He says, "The Strangers' Friend Society was founded by the Rev. Mr. John Wesley and myself, in Bristol, in the year 1789." * So that this useful institution was in its origin truly Wesleyan.

Another, but a kindred, kind of benevolence has done much to relieve the miseries of the poor by providing them with medicines and medical attendance during sickness. The benefits which have resulted from the dispensary system, now general throughout the country, are so evident as to require no lengthened detail. We are well aware that many, who profess to regard Wesley's ministerial character with respect, look upon his medical efforts as indicating his principal weakness. A better acquaintance with the subject would probably alter their views. In former times it was not very uncommon for eminent ministers to study physic, that they might be able to aid their people in bodily sickness, as well as assist them in the removal of spiritual maladies. Baxter did so at Kidderminster. And, however persons may now smile at Wesley's "Primitive Physic," it has been pronounced by a competent medical authority the

* Rev. S. R. Hall.

best non-professional treatise then extant. Medical science was then in a very low condition in this country, and throughout Europe. The empirical Radcliffe, and other dashing practitioners of the same character, entirely obscured the judicious and rising experimental school of Richard Mead, Sydenham, Cullen, and John Hunter, the fathers of the modern practice of medicine. To the writings of these worthies, who pursued a rational system of sanitary induction, Wesley was indebted for many of his most valuable recipes; and for the great mass of his simples, of which his little book chiefly consists, he had the countenance of such benevolent men as Bishop Berkeley, and the honourable Robert Boyle, who were severally the patrons of the use of tar-water, of plasters of treacle spread on brown paper, and other innocent remedies. From a similar source he derived the knowledge of electricity, then a comparatively new discovery, and a useful remedy, when judiciously applied, for many complaints, especially for weakness in the eyes and rheumatism. For the scientific application of this healing power, he took a house in Tabernacle Row, the nucleus of a small dispensary, which was attended by a skilful operator several years, for the benefit of the poor, on whom numerous cures were effected by means of electricity. Wesley made his "Primitive Physic" a much better book, after he had perused the duodecimo volume of the celebrated Dr. Hawes, then a young man, and practising as a surgeon in the neighbourhood of Finsbury. At his suggestion some of the mineral remedies were discarded, and the doses of others diminished.

Whatever were the merits or demerits of Wesley in medical knowledge and skill, it is a fact, that he endeavoured to provide suitable aid for the sick poor on a scale far beyond anything before attempted. We do not venture

to say, that he really was the originator of the present dispensary system. But when we are told that the oldest known institution of that kind, the Finsbury Dispensary, was not founded till the year 1770, and that its location is in the very neighbourhood where Wesley twenty years before put forth his benevolent efforts for the same purpose, the conjecture that this too is a fruit of Wesley's efforts seems sufficiently probable to deserve notice.

Education has been called the question of the day. But what person of that time gave it such prominence and devoted to it such energy as Wesley did? Before he thought of building a chapel, he began the erection of a school. Before Raikes, or Bell, or Lancaster entered upon their course of action, he made the education of children the object of his intense solicitude and persevering effort. And throughout his life, Day schools and Sunday schools were promoted by him with the most intense earnestness and anxiety. Education

Need we mention Missions, when Methodism is so essentially missionary? Certainly no man of his time did so much as Wesley to diffuse the Gospel of Christ throughout the world, or to prepare the Churches at home for the glorious efforts which we witness.

We might proceed to further details, and notice Tract and other Societies in which Wesley took the lead; for certainly no man at that time sent forth such a multitude of small, cheap, religious publications as he did: but enough has been said to show, that the spirit of Wesley's labours, and the character which he impressed upon his Societies, were in perfect harmony with the brightest triumphs of civilization, intellectual progress, and religious advancement, which mark the present period of our world's history; if, indeed, they were not always, what in some instances Publication of Tracts.

they undoubtedly were, the germs whence these glories of our day grew up.

We are justified, then, in regarding Wesleyan Methodism as a great reformation. It brought out from schools and colleges, and forgotten folios, into the daylight of every-day life, the glorious soul-saving truths of the Gospel. It sent these through the land, from the lips of men whose hearts burned with divine love, which they proclaimed with tongues of fire, and before whose word the people melted like wax. Through the operation of the grace of God, it brought into spiritual life, and reared up into power and influence, a spiritual brotherhood, banded together in opposition to ignorance, error, and sin, to promote the glory of God in the salvation of men. It devised and brought into effective action almost all the great benevolent agencies which are the glory of our day. It not only did all this, but so nicely were all the elements of action adjusted, so richly were they imbued with wisdom and power from on high, and so fully guided by the gracious Providence of God, that the whole work continued to go on with increasing prosperity and success; so that, at the death of Wesley, Methodism had a wider sphere of religious influence, a more close and harmonious internal union and spiritual power, and a larger measure of aggressive might for winning further conquest in the name of the Redeemer, than at any previous period of its history.

We now take our leave of Wesley and of the Methodism of his day; but we are free to confess that the mind lingers on the scene which we have so carefully and extensively surveyed. What darkness and immorality hung over our land when Methodism arose! True, there were Churches; but, speaking of them generally, it may be said, they were effete. There were professedly religious bodies and sys-

tems; but where was the throbbing heart, the earnest brain? The religious agency of the land was swathed in grave-clothes; and, under its chilling rule and corpse-like sway, the sanctuary was forsaken. True, there were professional teachers; but how seldom was the light of life seen in their eye, or the tongue of fire heard in their ministrations! An orthodox form was too generally regarded as of greater moment than the Spirit of the Lord. Under the influence of such views and services, religious faith became a wreck, spiritual life "enthusiasm," godly action "fanaticism," and even the scriptural hope of future blessedness vanished from the public mind. "Ichabod" was written on most pulpits, and over most altars. As a whole, the religion of the land consisted of externals. The shepherds had turned away from a spiritual contemplation of the Cross, and were very unfit to present it to their people. Those were evil days. The Apostolic Creed was but a shadow of lifeless truths; even the Bible lay before the nation as a dead letter.

In this lethargic crisis, Methodism arose from its cradle to grapple with these calamitous and terrible evils; but, had it possessed the might of the fabled Hercules, they could not have been destroyed by any summary exertion of power. What was possible it accomplished. Wesley and his preachers, having individually experienced the power of God unto salvation, and being endued with power from on high, went forth at the behest of Heaven, and cried, with strong and commanding faith, "Awake, thou that sleepest." With sudden and startling energy they broke the slumbers of the nation. They burst through all the restraints of Pharisaic form, and with the zeal of quenchless love went out into the highways and hedges, proclaim-

ing repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ. With the word of God in their thoughts and hearts, and with the power of God in their lives and lips, they wielded the two-edged sword of the Spirit, piercing the refuge of lies in which men had encased themselves. In spite of powers, they sped onward to their task, tearing aside the bands and shrouds which formalism had devised to cover the horrid visage of spiritual death. In spite of foes, they bore witness to the living influence of the Holy Ghost among men. What were cold looks and averted eyes to men whose hearts were cheered by the smile of God? What were contempt and ridicule to men inspired and upheld by divine love? What were difficulties and dangers to men who knew they were working out the will of their God and Saviour? All these antagonisms and persecutions, and all things visible and tangible, dwindled into insignificance, when compared with their estimation of the realities of the unseen and boundless world to come. Undaunted by apparent impossibilities, dangers, or deaths, they laboured that sinners might have spiritual life. Poor and destitute, without human resources or human aid, they moved on to the assault upon Satan and his strongholds, firm in faith and full of hope. When sinking beneath their toil and privation, they found refuge and strength at the throne of grace; they wrestled with the Angel of the Covenant, and returned to the conflict, nerved and mailed for a renewal of the struggle. Enduring the sorrow that wrings the heart, and the toil that wearies the frame, they advanced onwards and onwards, day after day, week after week, and year after year. Words which were as a fire, still burst forth warm and fresh from their hearts. Truths which were as a hammer, breaking the

rocks in pieces, were mingled in their ministrations with tones of deepest sympathy, and expressions of hallowed comfort, which stirred the soul and quickened the mind.

Thus these men of God, banded together to save souls and promote His glory, perseveringly endured as seeing Him who is invisible. Were they enthusiasts? It was such an enthusiasm as the Spirit of God inspires. Were they disorderly? It was the disorder of their Lord and Master, breaking through the trammels of ecclesiastical order. Breathing His Spirit, and obeying His word, they grasped the world in the arms of a mighty faith, and raised it to the twilight of heaven. And every hour since their day, the sunlight of Gospel blessing has been more richly irradiating our own country, and glancing from clime to clime and land to land; and our faith doubts not that this blessed morning light shall issue in that glorious Gospel day, when the knowledge of the Lord shall cover the earth as the waters cover the sea.

APPENDIX.

A, page 21.—*The Savoy Conference and its Results.*

This portion of the religious history of our country will be better understood when the following particulars are carefully considered. On the 26th of June, 1660, Richard Baxter was "sworn and admitted chaplain to the king's majesty in ordinary;" and he gives the following reasons for having had that honour conferred on him and others: "For the gratifying and engaging some chief Presbyterians that had brought in the king, by the Earl of Manchester's means above ten or twelve of them were designed to be the king's chaplains in ordinary. But never any of them was called to preach at court, save Mr. Calamy, Dr. Reynolds, myself, and Dr. Spurstow, each of us once; and I suppose never a man of them all ever received or expected a penny for the salary of their places."* Soon afterwards some lords about the court had interviews with these chaplains, to learn their views concerning the proposed agreement or coalition between moderate men; and at length introduced them to his majesty, who, in the presence of several members of his Privy Council, heard all their proposals, and gave them as gracious an answer as they could expect. "Either at this time or shortly after," says Baxter, "the king required us to draw up and offer him such proposals as we thought meet, in order to agreement about Church government. Hereupon we departed, and appointed to meet from day to day at Sion College, and to consult there openly with any of our brethren that would please to join with us. In these debates we found the great inconvenience of too many *actors*, though there cannot be too many *consenters* to what is well done. For that which seemed the most convenient expression to one, seemed inconvenient to another; and we that all agreed in matter had much ado to agree in words. About discipline we designedly adhered to Bishop Usher's model, without a word of alteration, that so they might have less to say against our offers as being our own."† The proposed papers were composed and presented, and they may be regarded as a syllabus of their arguments at the Savoy Conference. On the 4th of September, the Lord Chancellor sent them a rough copy of the king's intended "Declaration," on which, as requested, they wrote their remarks; which were taken into consideration on a day appointed at the Lord Chancellor's house, in the presence of the king, and of many noblemen, and eminent Episcopalian and Presbyterian divines. At this meeting, each of the two parties was to object to those expressions of which they disapproved; and Baxter informs us, "The great matter which we stopped at was, the word *consent*, where the bishop is to confirm by the *consent* of the pastor of that Church; and the king would by no means pass the word *consent*, either there or in the point of ordination or censure, because it gave the ministers a negative voice."‡ His Majesty's Declaration was published on the 25th of October, 1660. "A little before this," adds Baxter, "the bishops' party had appointed, at our request, a meeting with some of us, to try how near we could come. Accordingly Dr. Morley, Dr. Henchman, and Dr. Cosins, met Dr. Reynolds, Mr. Calamy, and myself; and, after a few roving discourses, we parted, without bringing them to any particular concessions for abatement: only their general talk was from the beginning, as if they would do anything for peace which was fit to be done. And they being at that time newly elect, but not consecrated, to their several bishoprics, we called them *My Lords;* which Dr. Morley once returned with such a passage as this, *We may call you also, I suppose, by the same title;* by which I perceived they had some purposes to try that way with us."§ Baxter and his friends were offered high preferment; but

* "*Reliquiæ Baxterianæ*, or Mr. Richard Baxter's Narrative of the most remarkable Passages of his Life and Times. London, 1696." Part ii., p. 229.

† *Idem*, part ii., p. 232. ‡ *Idem*, p. 276. § *Idem*, p. 274.

the greater part of them refused these overtures till they had seen the issue of their next conference.

Accordingly, a Commission, dated the 20th of March, 1661, was issued for a conference between twelve Episcopal divines and nine assistants, and the same number of divines and assistants on the part of the Presbyterians, to assemble at the Bishop of London's lodgings in the Savoy, on the 25th day of the same month, and to continue their deliberations four months. After many meetings and much discussion, on the 25th of July the Conference ended. "At the close of the last day it was agreed between them, that nothing should be given in on either side to the king, as charged on the other side, but what should be delivered in writing; and that the account they should each give should be this: *That they were all agreed upon the ends,*—the Churches' welfare, unity, and peace, and his majesty's happiness and contentment; *but that, after all their debates, they were disagreed as to the means.* And this was the end of the Assembly and Commission." *

Neal says, "Various censures were passed upon the Savoy Conference out of doors. The Independents were disgusted, because none of them were consulted; though it does not appear what concern they could have in it, their views being only to a toleration, not a comprehension. Some blamed their brethren for yielding too much, and others thought they might have yielded more. But when they saw the fruitless end of the treaty, and the papers that were published, most of them were satisfied." † Every reasonable man will come to the same conclusion, after he has perused those papers, which were first published in 1704, (8vo., pp. 352,) under the rather vague title of "The History of Nonconformity, as it was argued and stated by Commissioners on both Sides in 1661." ‡ The Presbyterian divines proceeded on this broad principle: As the original compilers of the Book of Common Prayer confess, that they left in it as much of the old Popish service as their consciences would allow, in condescension to the weakness and ignorance of new converts; it is our duty now, when Christian knowledge has taken deep root for many years among the people, to provide this better instructed and more hopeful generation with an improved Liturgy. These proposed forms of public devotion were composed by Richard Baxter; and if he had never written any other work than the "Reformed Liturgy," as he styled it, this alone would have immortalized his name as a man of profound wisdom and piety. "The design of this Liturgy was not to justle out the old one, where persons were satisfied with it; but to relieve such as durst not use the old one as it was, by helping them to forms taken out of the word of God." § The other papers by the two parties, published in that volume, embody a mass of information which will well repay perusal; and on many points, the reader will close the book with the observation, "Much may be said on both sides."

Two untoward circumstances occurred which injured the cause of the Presbyterians in the eyes of their opponents, though for neither of them are they blameworthy. When they were in communication with his majesty and his ministers on the subject of his Declaration in the autumn of 1660, they took that opportunity, when waiting upon the king, to signify "their satisfaction, that all such ministers should be cast out, as were in any benefice belonging formerly to one that was not grossly *insufficient* or *debauched;* but humbly begged that all who had succeeded *scandalous* persons might hold their places." ‖ Charles was, as usual, very debonair, and made large promises. These good men seem never to have reflected on the difficulty of ascertaining, in some hundreds of cases, what ministers had been *insufficient, debauched,* or *scandalous.* For this purpose, a royal commission would have been required; and before the members of it had terminated their labours, the greater part of the expectants would be in their graves.

At the close of the Savoy Conference, when two such expert dialecticians as "Baxter and Gunning spent several days in logical arguing, to the diversion of the town;" "who," as Bishop Burnet adds, "looked upon them as a couple of fencers engaged in a dispute that

* Calamy's "Abridgment of Mr. Baxter's History," p. 175.

† "History of the Puritans," vol. iv., p. 377. 8vo. 1738.

‡ The contents, in ten long particulars, are given in the title, but no mention of the Savoy is made in any of them except the sixth. A second edition appeared in 1703.

§ Calamy's "Abridgment," p. 158. ‖ *Ibid.,* p. 143.

could not be brought to any end; the bishops insisted upon *the laws being still in force;* to which they would admit of no exception, *unless it was proved that the matter of them was sinful.*" "The dispute broke off with noise and confusion, and high reflections on Mr. Baxter's dark and cloudy imagination, and his perplexed, scholastic, metaphysical manner of distinguishing, which tended rather to confound than to clear up that which was doubtful; and Bishop Sanderson, being then in the chair, pronounced that Dr. Gunning had the better of the argument." *

Calamy, in a short paragraph, has given a good description of the punishments which the dominant party in the Church was preparing for the dejected dissidents, while the Conference was in session at the Savoy in 1661: "The Convocation was chosen, which was politickly deferred till now. Had it been called when the king came in, the inferior clergy would have been against the diocesans: but afterwards many hundreds were turned out, that the old sequestered ministers, how meanly soever qualified, might come in. And the opinion of re-ordination being set on foot, all those ministers who, for twenty years together, (while bishops were laid aside,) had been ordained without diocesans, were, in many counties, denied any voices in the election of clerks for the Convocation. By which means, and a great many ministers' scruples, who thought it unlawful to have anything to do in choosing such a kind of assembly, the diocesan party wholly carried it in the choice. The election was in London, May 2nd, 1661: Mr. Calamy and Mr. Baxter were chosen by a majority of three voices. But the Bishop of London, having the power of choosing two out of four, or four out of six, that are chosen by the ministers in a certain circuit, *was so kind as to excuse them by pitching on others;* and so the city of London had no clerk in the Convocation. May the 4th, the paper of [Presbyterian] *exceptions* was given in to the bishops [at the Savoy Conference]. May the 7th, there was a meeting, at Sion College, of the ministers of London, for the choice of a president and assistants for the next year. Some of the Presbyterians, upon a pettish scruple, absenting themselves, the diocesan party carried it, and got possession and rule of the College. May the 8th, the new Parliament and Convocation sat down, being constituted of men fitted and devoted to the diocesan interest. May the 22nd, by order of Parliament, *the National Vow and Covenant* was burnt in the street, by the hands of the common hangman." †

B, page 57.—*Ostentatious Reference to Aid afforded to Charles II. in his Flight.*

After the Restoration, everything, favourable or adverse, which happened to the royal person at this crisis, appears to have been diligently referred to. We have a curious and amusing instance of this, in Wesley's "Arminian Magazine, 1788," p. 336, under the title of "Doggerel, or a good Story badly told."

"The following is an inscription on a tomb in the churchyard of St. Giles in the Fields, London:—

Here lies
RICHARD PENDREL,
Preserver and Conductor of his Majesty, King Charles the Second, after his escape from Worcester fight, in the year 1651, who died February 8th, 1671.

Hold, passenger, here 's shrouded in this hearse
Unparalleled Pendrel through the universe.
Like, when the eastern star from heaven gave light
To three lost kings, so he in such dark night
To Britain's monarch, lost in adverse war,
On earth appeared a second eastern star;
A pole astern in her rebellion main,
A pilot to her royal sovereign came:
Now to triumph in heaven's eternal sphere,
He is advanced for his just steerage here;
Whilst Albion's chronicle with matchless fame
Embalms the story of great Pendrel's name."

* Neal's "History," vol. iv., p. 332. † "Abridgment of Baxter's Life," p. 160.

C, page 105.—*Origin and Application of the Word "Methodist."*

THIS word was not, as is generally supposed, now first applied to a religious purpose, or to an association of professedly religious people. Charles Wesley was, indeed, the first man who was called a "Methodist" in connexion with the religious movement originated by the Wesleys; but the application of the term to very devoted or rigid religious people was much earlier. In a sermon preached at Lambeth in 1639, nearly a century before the application of the name to Charles Wesley and his friends at Oxford, this sentence occurs: "Where are now our Anabaptists, and plain pack-staff Methodists, who esteem all flowers of rhetoric in sermons no better than stinking weeds, and all elegancies of speech no better than profane spells?" In 1693, a pamphlet was published in a controversy between Dr. Daniel Williams and some other divines among the Nonconformists, with this title, "A War among the Angels of the Churches: wherein is showed the Principles of the New METHODISTS in the great Point of Justification," &c. In the fourth part of Gale's "Court of the Gentiles," 1727, that learned author speaks of a religious sect, whom he calls "the New Methodists."

The term "Methodists" was also applied to those theologians who describe the work of the Holy Spirit in strict conformity with the doctrine of absolute predestination, or of God's appointment of men to eternal happiness by a decree totally irrespective of their personal conduct. Hence, in the year 1741, a volume in opposition to this tenet was published under the title of, "The Use of Reason in Religion, in Answer to the Methodists," &c., by G. Nelson, rector of Oakley.

In an English dictionary published in 1706, the word "Methodist" occurs, and is thus explained: "One that treats of *method*, or affects to be *methodical*."

"'The word,' says an anonymous writer of the last century, 'is derived from *μέθοδος, ratio docendi, vel μεθοδικός, qui methodum sequitur*, and signifies a person who disposes things in a regular manner.' Methodists in botany are persons who study a judicious and nice arrangement of plants. Methodists in the history of medicine were a set of ancient physicians, who adopted and strictly followed certain rules in their diet and practice. Methodists in ecclesiastical history were a set of polemical doctors, who arose in France, in the seventeenth century, in opposition to the Protestants. The Wesleys and their friends at Oxford were precise in regulating their conduct, and arranging their time; on which account their fellow collegians cried out, 'They are quite Methodists: there is no man of science can be more exact in the methodizing his knowledge than they are in arranging their duties; no careful physician more exact in regulating the conduct of a patient, that his health be not impaired, than these in regulating their conduct, that neither their religion, their souls, nor their neighbours may suffer.' From such an innocent application of a name formerly applied to physicians, and always in a qualified sense to men of science," * Charles Wesley and his pious companions were called "Methodists." This, however, was not the primary designation which their religious conduct obtained for them. Their diligent and regular attendance on the communion first induced the appellation of "*Sacramentarians*." After that, they were called, "*The Godly Club*;" and lastly, as the crowning invention applicable to the case, "METHODISTS." After these explanations and definitions of the term "Methodist," it may not be amiss to give Wesley's own definition, as found in his Dictionary, published in 1753: "A Methodist—one that lives according to the method laid down in the Bible."

D, page 325.—*Extraordinary Travels and Labours of Wesley.*

THE Conference of 1765 closed at Manchester on Friday, August 23rd. On Sunday, he preached at seven, in the New Square; at one, at Stockport; and at six in the evening, at Macclesfield. The next day, by long stages, he reached Birmingham, and preached immediately on his arrival. On the 27th, he rode to Stroud, and the next day to Bristol. After resting three or four days, he set out for Cornwall, September 2nd, and preached that evening at Middlezoy, and the next day in the evening at Tiverton. On the 4th, he rode to North Tawton, where he was interrupted and prevented from finishing his sermon by a clergyman and a mob. The 5th, he reached Mill House, and preached at five. On the 6th, he preached

* JACKSON'S "Life of Charles Wesley," vol. i., p. 18.

at noon near Camelford, and in the evening at Port Isaac. The 7th, he preached at St. Cuthbert. On Sunday, 8th, at eight o'clock in the morning, he preached at St. Agnes; at one in the street at Redruth, and in the evening at Gwennap.

Monday, 9.—Redruth, five in the morning; at one, Porkellis; at six, Crowan.

Tuesday, 10.—Crowan, at five; Breage, at twelve; St John's, near Helstone, at six. Perceiving his voice fail, he preached for a while but twice a day.

Wednesday, 11.—Evening, at Newlyn.

Thursday, 12.—St. Just, in the evening.

Friday, 13.—St. Ives, evening.

Saturday, 14.—Hayle, at noon. Evening, St. Ives.

Sunday, 15.—St. Ives, seven in the morning, and Lelant at one, and in the evening.

Monday, 16.—Quarterly-meeting at Redruth. Preached at six on the market-house steps. Mr. C. came and read the Riot Act.

Tuesday, 17.—Rode to Medros, near St. Austle; held the quarterly-meeting for the Eastern Circuit.

Wednesday, 18.—Set out for Plymouth Dock; called on the way on one of the friends near Liskeard, and prayed with his wife; preached at Dock, and endeavoured to heal their dissensions.

Thursday, 19.—Rode to Tiverton, and preached.

Friday, 20.—Preached at noon near Taunton.

Saturday, 21.—Preached about noon at Shepton Mallet, and rode on to Bristol, where he seems to have remained two or three days.

Wednesday, 25.—About one, preached at Paulton, after visiting the neighbouring places.

Saturday, 28.—Preached at noon at Bath.

Monday, 30, and two following days, examined the Society in Bristol.

Saturday, October 5.—Spent some time with the children at Kingswood.

Wednesday, 9.—Read Mr. Jones's "Essay on the Principles of Philosophy."

Friday, 11.—A day of fasting and prayer.

Sunday, 13.—Renewal of Covenant.

Monday, 14.—Preached at Shaftesbury.

Tuesday, 15.—Preached at Wincanton. A time of remarkable blessing.

Sunday, 20.—Preached a funeral sermon at Kingswood.

Monday, 21.—Went by coach to Salisbury.

Thursday, 24.—Came to London.

Monday, 28.—Breakfasted with Mr. Whitefield.

Sunday, November 24.—Preached from, "The Lord our righteousness."

Monday, December 2.—Went to Canterbury; examined the Society one by one.

Tuesday, 3.—Rode to Dover. The Society prosperous.

Wednesday, 4.—Preached at noon at Sandwich, and in the evening at Margate.

Thursday, 5.—Rode back to Faversham.

Saturday, 7.—Returned to London.

Wednesday, 11.—Conversed with one who had been a Popish priest.

Thursday, 12.—Rode over to Leytonstone, and found one truly Christian family (Miss Bosanquet's, afterward Mrs. Fletcher).

Friday, 13.—Examined the children one by one.

Sunday, 15.—Buried the remains of Henry Perronet.

Wednesday, 18.—Riding through the Borough, his horse fell with him, after which he went in a coach to Shoreham.

Saturday, 21.—Not yet being able to ride, returned to London in a chariot.

Sunday, 22.—Ill able to go through the service at West Street; assisted by Mr. Greaves.

Thursday, 26.—Would have been glad of a few days' rest, but could not at this busy season. Electrified morning and evening; lameness mended slowly.

Wednesday, January 1, 1766.—A large congregation at the Foundery, at four o'clock, A.M. In the evening preached at Spitalfields. Covenant in the evening.

Friday, 3.—"Mr. B.—— called on me, now calm, and in his right mind."

Sunday, 5.—In the evening at Lewisham.

Thursday, 9.—Read Bishop Lowth's "Answer" to Bishop W——.

Monday, 13.—Went in the machine to Bury, and preached.

Tuesday 14.—Travelled over frozen roads to Yarmouth, and preached.

Thursday 16.—Rode to Norwich, and preached at seven. Spent three days there.

Monday, 20.—Travelled to White Elm, and on

Tuesday, 21.—Reached Colchester; preached morning and evening.

Friday, 24.—Returned to London.

Tuesday, 28.—"Our brethren met to consider our temporal affairs."

Friday, 31.—"Mr. Whitefield called on me. He breathes nothing but peace and love."

Sunday, Feb. 2.—"I dined with W. Welsh, the father of the late Society for Reformation of Manners."

Monday, 10, and four following days, wrote a catalogue of the Society, now reduced from 2,800 to 2,200,—"the fruit of George Bell's enthusiasm, and Thomas Maxfield's gratitude."

Monday, 17.—Preached at Sundon.

Tuesday, 18.—Went to Bedford, and,

Wednesday, 19.—To Copel, and preached a funeral sermon; and in the evening at Bedford.

Thursday, 20.—Preached at Hartford, and in the evening at Leytonstone.

Friday, 21.—Preached at Old Ford.

Sunday, 23.—Went to Lewisham, and finished the notes on the Book of Job.

March 1.—Read Bishop Lowth's Lectures on Hebrew Poetry.

Thursday, 6.—"Our brethren met" again on account of the public debt, and did not separate until more than all was subscribed (£610).

Sunday, 9.—"In the evening I went to Knightsbridge;" and on the morning of

Monday, 10.—Took the machine for Bristol.

Tuesday, 11.—Preached at Bristol in the evening.

Wednesday, 12.—"Rode over to Kingswood, and told my whole mind to the masters and servants," and spoke strongly to the children

Sunday, 16.—Preached at Princes Street at eight, at Kingswood at ten. In the Square at Bristol in the evening.

Monday, 17.—Rode to Stroud.

Tuesday, 18.—Preached at Painswick at seven, and at Cheltenham about ten; and in the after part of the day at Evesham.

Wednesday, 19.—Travelled to Birmingham, and preached in the evening.

Thursday, 20.—Rode to Burton, and preached at ten; then went on to Nottingham, and preached in the evening.

Sunday, 23.—Preached morning and evening.

Monday, 24.—Rode to Derby, and preached.

Tuesday, 25.—At ten preached in the new house at Creitch, thence rode through showers of snow to Sheffield, and preached in the evening.

Thursday, 27.—Preached in the morning at the village of Eyam, near the High Peak; and afterward at Maxfield.

Good Friday, 28.—Attended church, and afterward preached at Stockport; and at six in the evening at Manchester.

Saturday, 29, and Sunday, 30.—Preached each day at Manchester, and explained the nature of the yearly subscription.*

Tuesday, April 1.—Carefully examined the state of the Society.

Wednesday, 2.—Rode through heavy rain to Chester.

Friday, 4.—Visited a poor sick woman, and administered the sacrament.

Monday, 7.—Preached at Warrington at noon, thence rode to Liverpool and regulated the Society.

Thursday, 10.—Read over a wonderful chapel deed lately made here.

* Now called "the Yearly Collection."

Friday, 11.—Preached near Wigan to a large congregation.

Saturday, 12.—Preached at Brinsley, three or four miles from Wigan; and about six in the street at Bolton.

Sunday, 13.—At Bolton.

Monday, 14.—Preached at Middleton, six miles from Manchester.

Tuesday, 15.—Preached at Chapel-en-le-Frith.

Wednesday, 16.—Preached at Doncaster in the afternoon, thence went on to Epworth.

Friday, 18.—Set out for the eastern part of Lincolnshire; preached at Awkborough and Barrow, and next day came to Grimsby.

Monday, 21.—Between nine and ten began preaching in the open air at Louth, then passed on to Trusthorpe in the Marsh, and preached again.

Tuesday, 22.—Preached at Horncastle.

Wednesday, 23.—Preached again at five, in Torrington at nine, about two at Scotter, and at six at the Ferry.

Thursday, 24.—Rode to Epworth, and the next day through heavy rain to Swinefleet, and preached.

Sunday, 27.—Rode to Misterton, visited a young woman in distressing affliction, and preached; then attended church at Haxey, and heard a sermon against the Methodists; and between one and two preached again at Westwood Side, and again at four in the market-place at Epworth.

Monday, 28.—Preached at Thorne, and afterward went to York, preached, and met the Society.

Tuesday, 29.—Preached at noon in the new house at Thirsk, and in the evening at Yarm.

Wednesday, 30.—Preached at Newcastle.

Thursday, May 1.—Enjoyed a little rest.

Sunday, 4.—The rain necessitated preaching in-doors morning and evening. Preached at the Fell in the afternoon.

Tuesday, 6.—Rode to Sunderland.

Wednesday, 7, and Thursday, 8.—Preached in Monkwearmouth church the evening of each day.

Sunday, 11.—The weather not permitting out-door service, preached in the chapel morning and evening, and in the church at eleven. Renewed the Covenant at the evening service.

Monday, 12.—Preached at South Shields at noon, North Shields in the evening, and then returned to Newcastle; and on the following days preached at as many of the neighbouring places as possible.

Monday, 19.—Set out northward, preached at Placey at two, and in the evening at Morpeth.

Tuesday, 20.—Preached at noon at Felton, and at Alnwick in the evening.

Thursday, 22.—Preached in the street at Belford, and in the evening at Berwick.

Friday, 23.—Preached at Coppersmith, to a people who seemed to know everything and to feel nothing, in the morning; and at Dunbar in the evening.

Saturday, 24.—Preached in the afternoon at Preston Pans, and in the evening at Edinburgh.

Monday, 26.—Spent some time in the National Assembly.

Wednesday, 28.—Preached at Leith.

Sunday, June 1.—Preached in the morning at seven, heard a sermon in the new kirk in the afternoon, and preached again in the evening.

Monday, 2.—Came to Dundee very wet, but preached out of doors in the evening; and also on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday.

Friday, 6.—Went on to Aberdeen, about seventy miles, and preached.

Sunday, 8.—Preached at eight, heard a sermon at Old Aberdeen in the afternoon, and preached again in the evening.

Monday, 9.—Preached, and held a watch-night.

Tuesday, 10.—Rode to Sir Archibald Grant's, and preached in the church.

Wednesday, 11.—Returned to Aberdeen, where many of the people are much alive to God.

Friday, 13.—Reached Brechin a little before twelve, and preached in the market; and again in the evening at Dundee.

Saturday, 14.—Returned to Edinburgh.

Sunday, 15.—Preached at five in the morning, and in the afternoon.

Monday, 16.—Preached in the evening, and again on Tuesday.

Wednesday, 17.—Set out for Glasgow; preached in the house.

Thursday, 18.—Preached out of doors, and again on Friday and Saturday.

Sunday, 22.—Preached at seven out of doors, and again in the evening.

Monday, 23.—Rode to Thorny Hill, sixty miles from Glasgow.

Tuesday, 24.—Reached Dumfries by eight, and pushed on for Solway Frith.

Wednesday, 25.—Rode to Whitehaven, where the remainder of the week was spent.

Sunday, 29.—Met the children, and preached in the evening.

Monday, 30.—Rode seventy miles to Arthur Johnson's, near Brough.

Tuesday, July 1.—Preached at seven, then rode on to Barnard Castle and met the Society stewards, and preached at six and held a love-feast.

Wednesday, 2.—Preached in Teesdale at noon, and in Weardale in the evening.

Thursday, 3.—Rode to Wolsingham, preached in the middle of the town, and in the evening arrived at Newcastle.

Saturday, 5.—Rode to Sunderland.

Sunday, 6.—Preached at eight at the east end of the town to a huge multitude, again at Gateshead Fell, and afterwards at Garthheads at five.

Monday, 7.—Rode to Durham and preached at noon; and in the evening in the assembly room at Hartlepool.

Tuesday, 8.—Preached at Stockton.

Wednesday, 9.—Held the quarterly-meeting at Yarm. Increase in the Societies.

Thursday, 10.—Preached at Potto in the afternoon, and in the evening at Hutton Rudby.

Friday, 11.—Preached at five, again at nine in the new house at Stokesley, came to Guisborough a little before twelve and preached immediately, then rode on to Whitby and preached at seven; and was, he says, "no more tired than when I rose in the morning."

Sunday, 13.—Preached at seven in the room, at one in the main street on the other side of the water, and at five in the new market-place.

Monday, 14.—Preached at five; rode on to Robin Hood's Bay and preached at one; and again at Scarborough, in a garden near the town, in the evening.

Tuesday, 15.—Preached in the evening.

Wednesday, 16.—Arrived at Middleton, near Pickering, and preached in the church soon after ten; and again in the evening at Malton.

Thursday, 17.—In the way to Beverley, called on Sir Charles Hotham, and spent a comfortable hour, and then preached at Hull, and at Beverley at six.

Saturday, 19.—Preached at Pocklington at one, and in the evening at York.

Sunday, 20.—Preached at eight; then attended St. Saviour's church, and preached there.

Wednesday, 23.—Went on to Tadcaster, and preached in the evening.

Thursday, 24.—Preached at Pateley Bridge.

Friday, 25.—Rode to Skipton in Craven, and preached.

Saturday, 26.—Preached at Addingham about nine, and at Guiseley in the evening.

Sunday, 27.—Preached in Baildon churchyard morning and afternoon, and at Bradford in the evening.

Tuesday, 29.—Preached at Colne, and in the evening near the preaching-house at Paddiham.

Wednesday, 30.—Rode to Rosendale, and preached in the new house.

Thursday, 31.—Preached at Bacup, then rode on to Heptonstall, and preached again.

Friday, August 1.—Rode on to Ewood, preached at one in a meadow; then went on to Halifax, and preached in the evening.

Sunday, 3.—Preached morning and afternoon on a little scaffold by the side of Haworth church to immense congregations. The communicants alone filled the church.

Monday, 4.—At one preached at Bingley, and in the evening to a large congregation at Otley.

Tuesday, 5.—Rode to Bradford.

Wednesday 6.—Preached at Great Gomersal, and in the evening at Dewsbury.

Thursday, 7.—Rode to Horbury, and preached in the new house.

Friday, 8.—Rode to Huddersfield, and preached in the church.

Sunday, 10.—Preached in the churchyard to a congregation supposed to be twenty thousand; and again in the evening at Leeds, to another about the same size.

On the following Tuesday the Conference began; so this record contains a brief outline of Wesley's labours during one Methodistic year.

E, page 402.—*The Rev. J. Wesley to Lord North, on the American War.*

Note.—It appears that Wesley, being greatly impressed with the impropriety and impolicy of the course pursued by the government, wrote the following letter, a copy of which he sent to Lord North as premier, and another to the Earl of Dartmouth as secretary for the colonies. The latter still exists in Wesley's handwriting; and the author was offered a sight of this document on his engaging not to publish it. This he respectfully declined; and afterward fortunately obtained a transcript of the one sent to Lord North, with full liberty to print it.

ARMAGH, *June 15th*, 1775.

MY LORD,—I would not speak, as it may seem to be concerning myself with things that lie out of my province; but I dare not refrain from it any longer. I think silence in the present case would be a sin against God, against my country, and against my own soul. But what hope can I have of doing good, of making the least impression upon your lordship, when so many have spoken in vain, and those far better qualified to speak on so delicate a subject? They were better qualified in some respects; in others they were not. They had not less bias upon their minds; they were not free from worldly hopes and fears. Their passions were engaged; and how easily do those blind the eyes of their understanding! They were not more impartial; most of them were prejudiced in the highest degree. They neither loved the king nor his ministers; rather they hated them with a perfect hatred; and your lordship knows that you could not, if you were a man, avoid having some prejudice to them. In this case it would be hardly possible to feel the full force of their arguments. They had not better means of information, of knowing the real tempers and sentiments either of the Americans on the one hand, or the English, Irish, or Scots on the other. Above all, they trusted in themselves, in their own power of convincing and persuading; I trust only in the living God, who hath the hearts of all men in His hands. And whether my writing do any good or no, it need do no harm; for it rests within your lordship's breast whether any eye but your own shall see it. I do not intend to enter upon the question, whether the Americans are in the right or in the wrong. Here all my prejudices are against the Americans; for I am a High Churchman, the son of a High Churchman, bred up from my childhood in the highest notions of passive obedience and non-resistance; and yet, in spite of all my long-rooted prejudices, I cannot avoid thinking, if I think at all, these, an oppressed people, asked for nothing more than their legal rights, and that in the most modest and inoffensive manner that the nature of the thing would allow. But waving this, waving all considerations of right and wrong, I ask, Is it common sense to use force toward the Americans? A letter now before me, which I received yesterday, says, "Four hundred of the regulars and forty of the militia were killed in the late skirmish." What a disproportion is this! And this is the first essay of raw men against regular troops. You see, my lord, whatever has been affirmed, these men will not be frightened; and it seems they will not be conquered so easily as was at first imagined. They will probably dispute every inch of ground, and, if they die, die sword in hand. Indeed, some of our valiant officers say, "Two thousand men will clear America of these rebels." No, nor twenty thousand, be they rebels or not, nor perhaps treble that number. They are as strong men as you; they are as

valiant as you, if not abundantly more valiant, for they are one and all enthusiasts,—enthusiasts for liberty. They are calm, deliberate enthusiasts; and we know how this principle breathes into softer souls stern love of war, and thirst of vengeance, and contempt of death. We know men, animated with this spirit, will leap into a fire, or rush into a cannon's mouth.

"But they have no experience in war." And how much more have our troops? Very few of them ever saw a battle. "But they have no discipline." That is an entire mistake. Already they have near as much as our army, and they will learn more of it every day; so that in a short time, if the fatal occasion continue, they will understand it as well as their assailants. "But they are divided amongst themselves." So you are informed by various letters and memorials. So, doubt not, was poor Rehoboam informed concerning the ten tribes. So, nearer our own times, was Philip informed concerning the people of the Netherlands. No, my lord, they are terribly united. Not in the province of New England only, but down as low as the Jerseys and Pennsylvania. The bulk of the people are so united that to speak a word in favour of the present English measures would almost endanger a man's life. Those who informed me of this, one of whom was with me last week, lately come from Philadelphia, are no sycophants; they say nothing to curry favour; they have nothing to gain or lose by me. But they speak with sorrow of heart what they have seen with their own eyes, and heard with their own ears.

These men think, one and all, be it right or wrong, that they are contending *pro aris et focis;* for their wives, children, and liberty. What an advantage have they herein over many that fight only for pay! none of whom care a straw for the cause wherein they are engaged; most of whom strongly disapprove of it. Have they not another considerable advantage? Is there occasion to recruit the troops? Their supplies are at hand, and all round about them. Ours are three thousand miles off! Are we then able to conquer the Americans, suppose they are left to themselves? suppose all our neighbours should stand stock-still, and leave us and them to fight it out? But we are not sure of this. Nor are we sure that all our neighbours will stand stock-still. I doubt they have not promised it; and, if they had, could we rely upon those promises? Yet it is not probable they will send ships or men to America. Is there not a shorter way? Do they not know where England and Ireland lie? And have they not troops, as well as ships, in readiness? All Europe is well apprised of this; only the English know nothing of the matter! What if they find means to land but ten thousand men? Where are the troops in England or Ireland to oppose them? Why, cutting the throats of their brethren in America! Poor England, in the mean time! "But we have our militia,—our valiant, disciplined militia. These will effectually oppose them." Give me leave, my lord, to relate a little circumstance, of which I was informed by a clergyman who knew the fact. In 1716 a large body of militia were marching towards Preston against the rebels. In a wood which they were passing by, a boy happened to discharge his fowling-piece. The soldiers gave in all for lost, and, by common consent, threw down their arms and ran for life. So much dependence is to be placed on our valorous militia.

But, my lord, this is not all. We have thousands of enemies, perhaps more dangerous than French or Spaniards. As I travel four or five thousand miles every year, I have an opportunity of conversing freely with more persons of every denomination than any one else in the three kingdoms. I cannot but know the general disposition of the people,—English, Scots, and Irish; and I know a large majority of them are exasperated almost to madness. Exactly so they were throughout England and Scotland about the year 1640, and in a great measure by the same means; by inflammatory papers which were spread, as they are now, with the utmost diligence, in every corner of the land. Hereby the bulk of the population were effectually cured of all love and reverence for the king. So that, first despising, then hating him, they were just ripe for open rebellion. And, I assure your lordship, so they are now. They want nothing but a leader. Two circumstances more are deserving to be considered: the one, that there was at that time a decay of general trade almost throughout the kingdom; the other, there was a common dearness of provisions. The case is the same in both respects at this day. So that even now there are multitudes of people, that, having nothing to do, and nothing to eat, are ready for the first bidder; and that, without inquiring

into the merits of the cause, would flock to any who would give them bread. Upon the whole, I am really sometimes afraid that this evil is from the Lord. When I consider the astonishing luxury of the rich, and the shocking impiety of rich and poor, I doubt whether general dissoluteness of manners does not demand a general visitation. Perhaps the decree is already gone forth from the Governor of the world. Perhaps even now,

> "As he that buys surveys a ground,
> So the destroying angel measures it around.
> Calm he surveys the perishing nation;
> Ruin behind him stalks, and empty desolation."

J. WESLEY.

F, page 420.—*Plan of the Leeds Circuit for the year* 1777.

1777.	MAY				JUNE					JULY			
SUNDAYS.	4	11	18	25	1	8	15	22	29	6	13	20	27
Kippax, Garforth, and Barwick				W S				T G				J N	
Saxton and Aberford		Rip				W F				J W			
Seacroft, Chapeltown, and Woodside		T B		J W		Ser		F S		R B		D P	
Eccup and Harewood		W F		W P		J St		Rip		P B		F S	
Thorner and Keswick		F S		T G		P B		J St		W F		M P	
Wetherby		W S		Rip		J W		J N		D P		T G	
Pannal and Kearby		Ser		J M		R B		W F		T P		J W	
Wortley, Bramley, and Armley		R B		J N		F S		J W		W P		R N	
Morley		J N		D P		W P		W S		T G		R B	
Brotherton and Ferrybridge		T G		R B		D P		W P		Rip		W S	
Ackworth		D P		J S		T G		R N		S W		Rip	
Knaresborough and Ribston		W J		J B		W S		Scr		J N		W P	
Woodhouse	J T		T G	S W	W T	J N	T G	R B	T J	F S	T G		J T
Yeadon	J N		F S		Scr		J W		W S		Rip		D P
Otley	D P		W P		F S		Rip		W F		W S		J S
Rothwell	W S		R B		J N		F S		D P		W P		T G
Weeton and Harewood	W P		D P		Rip		J N		R B		J W		W S
Staincross and Cudworth	F S		J N		T B		S W		R N		W F		F S
Horbury and Wakefield	T G		J W		D P		J S		W P		R B		J N
Horsforth and Bramhope	W T		J St		M P		W P		P B		Scr		T B
Clifford and Collingham	J W		P B		W F		Scr		J S		J St		Rip
Killinghall and Pannal	Rip		M P		J St		D P		J N		J M		W P
Pontefract and Castleford	P B		J S		W P		R N		M P		D P		R B
Thorner and Bardsey			Rip				R B				J N		
Hunslet and Holbeck	J St		W F		P B		M P		S W		F S		R N
Belle Isle and Beeston	M P		S W		R N		T B		J St		J S		W F
Seacroft and Thorner	R B												P B
Bramley and Armley					T G								
Woodside and Leeds									T G				

The letters in the columns are the initials of the local preachers' names; and it will be seen that the Circuit was divided into two parts, which had preaching on alternate Sundays. The first printed plan for local preachers in the Leeds Circuit was issued in January, 1795. By the favour of a kind friend, we have before us copies of seventeen weekly plans, made by Wesley himself, (and preserved mostly in his handwriting,) for the supply of the London Circuit with preaching. They range from April 15th, 1754, to August 12th, 1754; but as one of them was printed in the "Wesleyan Methodist Magazine" for 1855, p. 428, it is not thought necessary to insert them here.

G, page 447.—*Some of the Minutes of the American Conference*, 1780.

Q. 7. OUGHT not all the assistants to see to the settling of all the preaching-houses by trustees, and order the said trustees to meet once in half a year, and keep a register of their proceedings; if there are any vacancies, choose new trustees, for the better security of the houses, and let all the deeds be drawn in substance after that in the printed "Minutes?"

A. Yes.

Q. 8. Shall all the travelling preachers take a licence from every Conference, importing that they are assistants or helpers in connexion with us?

A. Yes.

Q. 9. Shall brother Asbury sign them in behalf of the Conference?

A. Yes.

Q. 10. Ought it to be strictly enjoined on all our local preachers and exhorters, that no one presume to speak in public without taking a note every quarter, (if required,) and be examined by the assistant with respect to his life, his qualification, and reception?

A. Yes.

Q. 11. Ought not all our preachers to make conscience of rising at four, and if not, yet at five? (Is it not a shame for a preacher to be in bed till six in the morning?)

A. Undoubtedly they ought.

Q. 12. Shall we continue in close connexion with the Church, and press our people to a closer connexion with her?

A. Yes.

Q. 13. Will this Conference grant the privilege to all the friendly clergy of the Church of England, at the request or desire of the people, to preach or administer the ordinances in our preaching-houses or chapels?

A. Yes.

Q. 14. What provision shall we make for the wives of married preachers?

A. They shall receive an equivalent with their husbands in quarterage, if they stand in need.

Q. 15. Ought not our preachers, if possible, to speak to every person one by one in the families where they lodge, before prayer, if time will permit; or give a family exhortation after reading a chapter?

A. They ought.

Q. 16. Ought not this Conference to require those travelling preachers who hold slaves, to give promises to set them free?

A. Yes.

Q. 17. Does this Conference acknowledge that slavery is contrary to the laws of God, man, and nature, and hurtful to society; contrary to the dictates of conscience and pure religion, and doing that which we would not others should do to us and ours?—Do we pass our disapprobation on all our friends who keep slaves, and advise their freedom?

A. Yes.

Q. 18. Shall we recommend our quarterly-meetings to be held on Saturdays and Sundays when convenient?

A. Agreed.

Q. 19. Shall not the Friday following every quarter-day be appointed as a day of fasting?

A. Yes.

Q. 20. Does this whole Conference disapprove the step our brethren have taken in Virginia?

A. Yes.

Q. 21. Do we look upon them no longer as Methodists in connexion with Mr. Wesley and us till they come back?

A. Agreed.

Q. 22. Shall brothers Asbury, Garrettson, and Watters attend the Virginia Conference, and inform them of our proceedings in this, and receive their answer?

A. Yes.

Q. 23. Do we disapprove of the practice of distilling grain into liquor? Shall we disown our friends who will not renounce the practice?

A. Yes.

Q. 24. What shall the Conference do in case of brother Asbury's death or absence?

A. Meet once a year, and act according to the "Minutes."

Q. 25. Ought not the assistant to meet the coloured people himself, and appoint as helpers in his absence proper white persons, and not suffer them to stay late and meet by themselves?

A. Yes.

Q. 26. What must be the conditions of our union with our Virginian brethren?

A. To suspend all their administrations for one year, and all meet together in Baltimore. —BANGS'S "History of the Methodist Episcopal Church," vol. i., pp. 132–135.

H, page 418.—*Account of the Reconciliation of the two American Conferences, from Mr. Asbury's Journal.*

WE rode to Granger's, fifteen miles, stopped and fed our horses. These people are full of the ordinances; we talked and prayed with them, then rode on to the Manakin-town ferry, much fatigued with the ride; went to friend Smith's, where all the preachers were met. I conducted myself with cheerful freedom, but found there was a separation in heart and practice. I spoke to my countryman, John Dickins, and found him opposed to our continuance in union with the Episcopal Church. Brothers Watters and Garrettson tried their men, and found them inflexible.

Tuesday, 9.—The Conference was called: brothers Watters, Garrettson, and myself stood back, and being afterward joined by brother Dromgoole, we were desired to come in, and I was permitted to speak. I read Mr. Wesley's Thoughts against a Separation,—showed my private letters of instructions from Mr. Wesley,—set before them the sentiments of the Delaware and Baltimore Conferences,—read our epistles, and read my letter to brother Gatch, and Dickins's letter in answer. After some time spent this way, it was proposed to me, if I would get the Circuits supplied, they would desist; but that I could not do. We went to preaching; I spoke on Ruth ii. 4, and spoke as though nothing had been the matter among the preachers or people; and we were greatly pleased and comforted,—there was some moving among the people. In the afternoon we met; the preachers appeared to me to be farther off; there had been, I thought, some talking out of doors. When we, Asbury, Garrettson, Watters, and Dromgoole, could not come to a conclusion with them, we withdrew, and left them to deliberate on the condition I offered, which was to suspend the measures they had taken for one year. After an hour's conference, we were called to receive their answer; which was, they could not submit to the terms of union. I then prepared to leave the house, to go to a near neighbour's to lodge, under the heaviest cloud I ever felt in America. O, what I felt! nor I alone, but the agents on both sides! They wept like children, but kept their opinions.

Wednesday, 10.—I returned to take leave of Conference, and to go off immediately to the north; but found they were brought to an agreement while I had been praying, as with a broken heart, in the house we went to lodge at; and brothers Watters and Garrettson had been praying upstairs where the Conference sat. We heard what they had to say. Surely the hand of God has been greatly seen in all this: there might have been twenty promising preachers, and three thousand people, seriously affected by this separation; but the Lord

would not suffer this. We then had preaching by brother Watters, on, "Come thou with us, and we will do thee good:" afterward we had a love-feast; preachers and people wept, prayed, and talked, so that the spirit of dissension was powerfully weakened, and I hoped it will never take place again.—BANGS's "History of the Methodist Episcopal Church," vol. i., pp. 136, 137.

I, page 492.—*The Deed of Declaration.*

TO ALL to whom these presents shall come, JOHN WESLEY, late of Lincoln College, *Oxford*, but now of the *City Road*, London, Clerk, sendeth greeting:

WHEREAS divers buildings commonly called chapels, with a messuage and dwelling-house, or other appurtenances to each of the same belonging, situate in various parts of Great Britain, have been given and conveyed, from time to time, by the said John Wesley to certain persons, and their heirs, in each of the said gifts and conveyances named, which are enrolled in his Majesty's High Court of Chancery, upon the acknowledgment of the said John Wesley, (pursuant to the Act of Parliament in that case made and provided,) UPON TRUST, that the trustees in the said several deeds respectively named, and the survivors of them, and their heirs and assigns, and the trustees for the time being, to be elected as in the said deeds is appointed, should permit and suffer the said John Wesley, and such other person and persons as he should for that purpose from time to time nominate and appoint, at all times during his life, at his will and pleasure, to have and enjoy the free use and benefit of the said premises, that he the said John Wesley, and such person or persons as he should nominate and appoint, might therein preach and expound God's holy word: and upon further trust, that the said respective trustees, and the survivors of them, and their heirs and assigns, and the trustees for the time being, should permit and suffer Charles Wesley, brother of the said John Wesley, and such other person and persons as the said Charles Wesley should for that purpose from time to time nominate and appoint, in like manner during his life, to have, use, and enjoy the said premises respectively for the like purposes as aforesaid: and after the decease of the survivor of them, the said John Wesley, and Charles Wesley, then upon further trust, that the said respective trustees, and the survivors of them, and their heirs and assigns, and the trustees for the time being for ever, should permit and suffer such person and persons, and for such time and times as should be appointed at the yearly Conference of the people called Methodists in London, Bristol, or Leeds, and no others, to have and enjoy the said premises for the purposes aforesaid: and whereas divers persons have in like manner given, or conveyed, many chapels, with messuages and dwelling-houses, or other appurtenances to the same belonging, situate in various parts of Great Britain, and also in Ireland, to certain trustees in each of the said gifts and conveyances respectively named, upon the like trusts, and for the same uses and purposes as aforesaid, (except only that in some of the said gifts and conveyances, no life estate, or other interest, is therein or thereby given and reserved to the said Charles Wesley:) and whereas, for rendering effectual the trusts created by the said several gifts or conveyances, and that no doubt or litigation may arise with respect unto the same, or the interpretation and true meaning thereof, it has been thought expedient, by the said John Wesley, on behalf of himself as donor of the several chapels, with the messuages, dwelling-houses, or appurtenances before-mentioned, as of the donors of the said other chapels, with the messuages, dwelling-houses, or appurtenances to the same belonging, given or conveyed to the like uses and trusts, to explain the words *Yearly Conference of the people called Methodists*, contained in all the said trust-deeds, and to declare *what persons* are members of the said Conference, and how the *succession* and *identity* thereof is to be continued: *Now therefore these presents witness*, that, for accomplishing the aforesaid purposes, the said John Wesley doth hereby declare, that the Conference of the people called Methodists in London, Bristol, or Leeds, ever since there hath been any yearly Conference of the said people called Methodists, in any of the said places, hath always heretofore consisted of the preachers and expounders of God's holy word, commonly called Methodist preachers, in connexion with, and under the care of, the said John Wesley, whom he hath thought expedient, year after year, to summons to meet him, in one or other of the said places of London, Bristol, or Leeds, to advise with them for the

promotion of the Gospel of Christ, to appoint the said persons so summoned, and the other preachers and expounders of God's holy word, also in connexion with, and under the care of, the said John Wesley, not summoned to the said yearly Conference, to the use and enjoyment of the said chapels and premises so given and conveyed upon trust for the said John Wesley, and such other person and persons as he should appoint during his life as aforesaid; and for the expulsion of unworthy, and admission of new persons under his care, and into his Connexion, to be preachers and expounders as aforesaid; and also of other persons upon trial for the like purposes: the names of all which persons so summoned by the said John Wesley, the persons appointed, with the chapels and premises to which they were so appointed, together with the duration of such appointments, and of those expelled, or admitted into Connexion, or upon trial, with all other matters transacted and done at the said yearly Conference, have year by year been printed and published under the title of "Minutes of Conference." *And these presents further witness*, and the said John Wesley doth hereby avouch and further declare, that the several persons herein-after named, to wit, the said John Wesley and Charles Wesley; Thomas Coke, of the city of London, Doctor of Civil Law, James Creighton, of the same place, Clerk, Thomas Tenant, of the same place, Thomas Rankin, of the same place; Joshua Keighley, of Seven Oaks, in the county of Kent; James Wood, of Rochester, in the said county of Kent; John Booth, of Colchester, Thomas Cooper, of the same place; Richard Whatcoat, of Norwich; Jeremiah Brettell, of Lynn, in the county of Norfolk, Jonathan Parkin, of the same place; Joseph Pescod, of Bedford; Christopher Watkins, of Northampton, John Barber, of the same place; John Broadbent, of Oxford, Joseph Cole, of the same place; Jonathan Cousins, of the city of Gloucester, John Brettell, of the same place; John Mason, of Salisbury, George Story, of the same place; Francis Wrigley, of St. Austell, in the county of Cornwall; William Green, of the city of Bristol; John Moon, of Plymouth-Dock, James Hall, of the same place; James Thom, of St. Austell, aforesaid; Joseph Taylor, of Redruth, in the said county of Cornwall; William Hoskins, of Cardiff, Glamorganshire; John Leech, of Brecon, William Saunders, of the same place; Richard Rodda, of Birmingham; John Fenwick, of Burslem, Staffordshire, Thomas Hanby, of the same place; James Rogers, of Macclesfield, Samuel Bardsley, of the same place; John Murlin, of Manchester, William Percival, of the same place; Duncan Wright, of the city of Chester, John Goodwin, of the same place; Parson Greenwood, of Liverpool, Zechariah Yewdal, of the same place, Thomas Vasey, of the same place; Joseph Bradford, of Leicester, Jeremiah Robertshaw, of the same place; William Myles, of Nottingham; Thomas Longley, of Derby; Thomas Taylor, of Sheffield, William Simpson, of the same place; Thomas Carlill, of Grimsby, in the county of Lincoln, Robert Scott, of the same place, Joseph Harper, of the same place; Thomas Corbett, of Gainsborough, in the said county of Lincoln, James Ray, of the same place; William Thompson, of Leeds, in the county of York, Robert Roberts, of the same place, Samuel Bradburn, of the same place; John Valton, of Birstal, in the said county, John Allen, of the same place, Isaac Brown, of the same place; Thomas Hanson, of Huddersfield, in the said county, John Shaw, of the same place; Alexander Mather, of Bradford, in the said county; Joseph Benson, of Halifax, in the said county, William Dufton, of the same place; Benjamin Rhodes, of Keighley, in the said county; John Easton, of Colne, in the county of Lancaster, Robert Costerdine, of the same place; Jasper Robinson, of the Isle of Man, George Button, of the same place; John Pawson, of the city of York; Edward Jackson, of Hull; Charles Atmore, of the said city of York; Launcelot Harrison, of Scarborough; George Shadford, of Hull aforesaid; Barnabas Thomas, of the same place; Thomas Briscoe, of Yarm, in the said county of York, Christopher Peacock, of the same place; William Thom, of Whitby, in the said county of York, Robert Hopkins, of the same place; John Peacock, of Barnard Castle; William Collins, of Sunderland; Thomas Dixon, of Newcastle-upon-Tyne, Christopher Hopper, of the same place, William Boothby, of the same place; William Hunter, of Berwick-upon-Tweed; Joseph Saunderson, of Dundee, Scotland, William Warrener, of the same place; Duncan M'Allum, of Aberdeen, Scotland; Thomas Rutherford, of the city of Dublin, in the kingdom of Ireland, Daniel Jackson, of the same place; Henry Moore, of the city of Cork, Ireland, Andrew Blair, of the same place; Richard Watkinson, of Limerick, Ireland; Nehemiah

Price, of Athlone, Ireland; Robert Lindsay, of Sligo, Ireland; George Brown, of Clones, Ireland; Thomas Barber, of Charlemont, Ireland; Henry Foster, of Belfast, Ireland; and John Crook, of Lisburn, Ireland, gentlemen, being preachers and expounders of God's holy word, under the care and in connexion with the said John Wesley, have been, and now are, and do, on the day of the date hereof, constitute *the members of the said Conference*, according to the true intent and meaning of the said several gifts and conveyances, wherein the words *Conference of the People called Methodists* are mentioned and contained. And that the said several persons before-named, and their successors for ever, to be chosen as hereinafter mentioned, are and shall for ever be construed, taken, and be *the Conference of the People called Methodists*. Nevertheless upon the terms, and subject to the regulations hereinafter prescribed, that is to say,

First, That the members of the said Conference, and their successors for the time being for ever, shall assemble once in every year, at London, Bristol, or Leeds, (except as after-mentioned) for the purposes aforesaid; and the time and place of holding every subsequent Conference shall be appointed at the preceding one; save that the next Conference after the date hereof shall be holden at Leeds, in Yorkshire, the last Tuesday in July next.

Second, The act of the majority in number of the Conference assembled as aforesaid shall be had, taken, and be the act of the whole Conference; to all intents, purposes, and constructions whatsoever.

Third, That after the Conference shall be assembled as aforesaid, they shall first proceed to fill up all the vacancies occasioned by death, or absence, as after-mentioned.

Fourth, No act of the Conference assembled as aforesaid shall be had, taken, or be the act of the Conference, until forty of the members thereof are assembled, unless reduced under that number by death since the prior Conference, or absence, as after-mentioned; nor until all the vacancies occasioned by death, or absence, shall be filled up by the election of new members of the Conference, so as to make up the number of one hundred, unless there be not a sufficient number of persons objects of such election: and during the assembly of the Conference, there shall always be forty members present at the doing of any act, save as aforesaid, or otherwise such act shall be void.

Fifth, The duration of the yearly assembly of the Conference shall not be less than five days, nor more than three weeks, and be concluded by the appointment of the Conference, if under twenty-one days; or otherwise the conclusion thereof shall follow of course at the end of the said twenty-one days; the whole of all which said time of the assembly of the Conference shall be had, taken, considered, and be the yearly Conference of the people called Methodists, and all acts of the Conference during such yearly assembly thereof shall be the acts of the Conference, and none other.

Sixth, Immediately after all the vacancies occasioned by death, or absence, are filled up by the election of new members as aforesaid, the Conference shall choose a president, and secretary, of their assembly, out of themselves, who shall continue such until the election of another president, or secretary, in the next or other subsequent Conference; and the said president shall have the privilege and power of two members in all acts of the Conference, during his presidency, and such other powers, privileges, and authorities, as the Conference shall from time to time see fit to intrust into his hands.

Seventh, Any member of the Conference absenting himself from the yearly assembly thereof for two years successively, without the consent, or dispensation of the Conference, and being not present on the first day of the third yearly assembly thereof at the time and place appointed for the holding of the same, shall cease to be a member of the Conference from and after the said first day of the said third yearly assembly thereof, to all intents and purposes, as though he was naturally dead. But the Conference shall and may dispense with, or consent to, the absence of any member from any of the said yearly assemblies, for any cause which the Conference may see fit or necessary; and such member, whose absence shall be so dispensed with, or consented to by the Conference, shall not by such absence cease to be a member thereof.

Eighth, The Conference shall and may expel, and put out from being a member thereof, or from being in connexion therewith, or from being upon trial, any person member of the

Conference, or admitted into connexion, or upon trial, for any cause which to the Conference may seem fit or necessary; and every member of the Conference so expelled and put out shall cease to be a member thereof to all intents and purposes, as though he was naturally dead. And the Conference, immediately after the expulsion of any member thereof as aforesaid, shall elect another person to be a member of the Conference, in the stead of such member so expelled.

Ninth, The Conference shall and may admit into connexion with them, or upon trial, any persons or persons whom they shall approve, to be preachers and expounders of God's holy word, under the care and direction of the Conference; the name of every such person or persons so admitted into Connexion or upon trial as aforesaid, with the time and degrees of the admission, being entered in the Journals or Minutes of the Conference.

Tenth, No person shall be elected a member of the Conference, who hath not been admitted into connexion with the Conference as a preacher and expounder of God's holy word, as aforesaid, for twelve months.

Eleventh, The Conference shall not, nor may nominate or appoint any person to the use and enjoyment of, or to preach and expound God's holy word in, any of the chapels and premises so given or conveyed, or which may be given or conveyed upon the trusts aforesaid, who is not either a member of the Conference, or admitted into connexion with the same, or upon trial, as aforesaid; nor appoint any person for more than three years successively to the use and enjoyment of any chapel and premises already given, or to be given or conveyed upon the trusts aforesaid, except ordained ministers of the Church of England.

Twelfth, That the Conference shall and may appoint the place of holding the yearly assembly thereof at any other city, town, or place, than London, Bristol, or Leeds, when it shall seem expedient so to do.

Thirteenth, And, for the convenience of the chapels and premises already, or which may hereafter be given or conveyed upon the trusts aforesaid, situate in Ireland, or other parts out of the kingdom of Great Britain, the Conference shall and may, when, and as often as it shall seem expedient, but not otherwise, appoint and delegate any member or members of the Conference, with all or any of the powers, privileges, and advantages hereinbefore contained or vested in the Conference; and all and every the acts, admissions, expulsions, and appointments whatsoever of such member or members of the Conference so appointed and delegated as aforesaid, the same being put into writing, and signed by such delegate or delegates, and entered in the Journals or Minutes of the Conference, and subscribed, as after-mentioned, shall be deemed, taken, and be, the acts, admissions, expulsions, and appointments of the Conference, to all intents, constructions, and purposes whatsoever, from the respective times when the same shall be done by such delegate or delegates, notwithstanding any thing herein contained to the contrary.

Fourteenth, All resolutions and orders touching elections, admissions, expulsions, consents, dispensations, delegations, or appointments, and acts whatsoever of the Conference, shall be entered and written in the Journals or Minutes of the Conference, which shall be kept for that purpose, publicly read, and then subscribed by the president and secretary thereof for the time being, during the time such Conference shall be assembled; and, when so entered and subscribed, shall be had, taken, received, and be the acts of the Conference; and such entry and subscription, as aforesaid, shall be had, taken, received, and be evidence of all and every such acts of the said Conference, and of their said delegates, without the aid of any other proof; and whatever shall not be so entered and subscribed, as aforesaid, shall not be had, taken, received, or be the act of the Conference: and the said president and secretary are hereby required and obliged to enter and subscribe as aforesaid, every act whatever of the Conference.

Lastly, Whenever the said Conference shall be reduced under the number of forty members, and continue so reduced for three yearly assemblies thereof successively, or whenever the members thereof shall decline or neglect to meet together annually for the purposes aforesaid, during the space of three years, that then, and in either of the said events, the Conference of the people called Methodists shall be extinguished, and all the aforesaid powers, privileges, and advantages shall cease; and the said chapels and premises, and all

other chapels and premises, which now are, or hereafter may be settled, given, or conveyed upon the trusts aforesaid, shall vest in the trustees for the time being of the said chapels and premises respectively, and their successors for ever; *upon trust* that they, and the survivors of them, and the trustees for the time being, do, shall, and may, appoint such person and persons to preach and expound God's holy word therein, and to have the use and enjoyment thereof for such time, and in such manner, as to them shall seem proper.

Provided always, that nothing herein contained shall extend, or be construed to extend, to extinguish, lessen, or abridge the life-estate of the said John Wesley, and Charles Wesley, or either of them, of and in any of the said chapels and premises, or any other chapels and premises wherein they the said John Wesley and Charles Wesley, or either of them, now have, or may have, any estate or interest, power or authority whatsoever. In witness whereof the said John Wesley hath hereunto set his hand and seal, the twenty-eighth day of February, in the twenty-fourth year of the reign of our Sovereign Lord George the Third, by the grace of God, of Great Britain, France, and Ireland, king, defender of the faith, and so forth, and in the year of our Lord one thousand seven hundred and eighty-four.

JOHN (Seal) WESLEY.

Sealed and delivered (being first duly stamped) in the presence of } WILLIAM CLULOW, Quality-court, Chancery-lane, London.
RICHARD YOUNG, Clerk to the said William Clulow.

The above is a true copy of the original deed, which is enrolled in Chancery, and was therewith examined by us,

WILLIAM CLULOW,
RICHARD YOUNG.

Letter to the Methodist Conference.

MY DEAR BRETHREN, CHESTER, *April 7th*, 1785.

SOME of our travelling preachers have expressed a fear, that, after my decease, you would exclude them either from preaching in connexion with you, or from some other privileges which they now enjoy. I know no other way to prevent such inconvenience, than to leave these my last words with you.

I beseech you, by the mercies of God, that you never avail yourselves of the Deed of Declaration to assume any superiority over your brethren; but let all things go on, among those itinerants who choose to remain together, exactly in the same manner as when I was with you, so far as circumstances will permit.

In particular, I beseech you, if you ever loved me, and if you now love God and your brethren, to have no respect of persons in stationing the preachers, in choosing children for Kingswood school, in disposing of the yearly contribution, and the Preachers' Fund, or any other public money: but do all things with a single eye, as I have done from the beginning. Go on thus, doing all things without prejudice or partiality, and God will be with you even to the end.

JOHN WESLEY.

K, page 554.—*Model Deed for the Settlement of Chapels.*

THE Indenture made —— ——, between Benjamin Heap, of ——, in the county of ——, on the one part, and Thomas Philips, hatter, &c., on the other part, WITNESSETH, That in consideration of five shillings, lawful money of Great Britain, by the said T. P., &c., to the said B. H., truly paid, before the sealing and delivering hereof, (the receipt whereof the said B. H. doth hereby acknowledge,) and for divers other considerations him thereunto moving, the said B. H. hath granted, bargained, and sold, and by these presents doth bargain and sell unto the said T. P., &c., their heirs and assigns for ever, all that lately erected house or tenement, with the yard thereunto adjoining, situate ——, in ——, aforesaid, now in the tenure or occupation of ——, together with all the ways, drains, and privileges to the said premises appertaining, and all the profits thereof, with all the right, title, and interest in

law and equity: to HAVE AND TO HOLD, the said house, yard, and other premises, to the said T. P. &c., their heirs and assigns for ever. NEVERTHELESS, upon special trust and confidence, and to the intent that they and the survivors of them, and the Trustees for the time being, do and shall permit John Wesley, of the City Road, London, Clerk, and such other persons as he shall from time to time appoint, at all times, during his natural life, and no other persons, to have and enjoy the free use and benefit of the said premises; that the said John Wesley, and such other persons as he appoints, may therein preach and expound God's holy word. And after his decease, upon further trust and confidence, and to the intent, that the said T. P., &c., or the major part of them, or the survivors of them, and the major part of the Trustees of the said premises for the time being, shall, from time to time, and at all times for ever, permit such persons as shall be appointed at the yearly Conference of the people called Methodists, in London, Bristol, Leeds, Manchester, or elsewhere, specified by name in a Deed enrolled in Chancery, under the hand and seal of the said John Wesley, and bearing date the 28th day of February, 1784, and no others, to have and to enjoy the said premises, for the purposes aforesaid: Provided always, that the persons preach no other doctrine than is contained in Mr. Wesley's "Notes upon the New Testament," and four volumes of "Sermons." And upon farther trust and confidence, that, as often as any of these Trustees, or the Trustees for the time being, shall die, or cease to be a member of the Society commonly called Methodists, the rest of the said Trustees, or of the Trustees for the time being, as soon as conveniently may be, shall and may choose another Trustee or Trustees, in order to keep up the number of —— Trustees for ever. In witness whereof the said B. H. hath hereunto set his hand and seal, the day and year above-written.

L, page 628.—*Rules of the United Societies.*

1. IN the latter end of the year 1739, eight or ten persons came to me in London, who appeared to be deeply convinced of sin, and earnestly groaning for redemption. They desired (as did two or three more the next day) that I would spend some time with them in prayer, and advise them how to flee from the wrath to come; which they saw continually hanging over their heads. That we might have more time for this great work, I appointed a day when they might all come together, which from thenceforward they did every week, namely, on Thursday, in the evening. To these, and as many more as desired to join with them, (for their number increased daily,) I gave those advices, from time to time, which I judged most needful for them; and we always concluded our meeting with prayer suited to their several necessities.

2. This was the rise of the United Society, first in London, and then in other places. Such a Society is no other than "a company of men having the form and seeking the power of godliness, united in order to pray together, to receive the word of exhortation, and to watch over one another in love, that they may help each other to work out their salvation."

3. That it may the more easily be discerned, whether they are indeed working out their own salvation, each Society is divided into smaller companies, called "classes," according to their respective places of abode. There are about twelve persons in every class; one of whom is styled "the leader." It is his business, (1.) To see each person in his class once a week at least, in order to inquire how their souls prosper; to advise, reprove, comfort, or exhort, as occasion may require; to receive what they are willing to give toward the relief of the poor. (2.) To meet the minister and the stewards of the Society once a week; in order to inform the minister of any that are sick, or of any that walk disorderly and will not be reproved; to pay to the stewards what they have received of their several classes in the week preceding; and to show their account of what each person has contributed.

4. There is one only condition previously required in those who desire admission into these Societies,—a desire "to flee from the wrath to come, to be saved from their sins:" but, wherever this is really fixed in the soul, it will be shown by its fruits. It is therefore expected of all who continue therein, that they should continue to evidence their desire of salvation,

First, by doing no harm, by avoiding evil in every kind; especially that which is most

generally practised: such is, the taking the name of God in vain; the profaning the day of the Lord, either by doing ordinary work thereon, or by buying or selling; drunkenness, buying or selling spirituous liquors, or drinking them, unless in cases of extreme necessity; fighting, quarrelling, brawling; brother going to law with brother; returning evil for evil, or railing for railing; the using many words in buying or selling; the buying or selling uncustomed goods; the giving or taking things on usury, that is, unlawful interest; uncharitable or unprofitable conversation, particularly speaking evil of magistrates or of ministers; doing to others as we would not they should do unto us; doing what we know is not for the glory of God, as the "putting on of gold or costly apparel;" the taking such diversions as cannot be used in the name of the Lord Jesus; the singing those songs, or reading those books, which do not tend to the knowledge or love of God; softness, and needless self-indulgence; laying up treasures upon earth; borrowing without a probability of paying; or taking up goods without a probability of paying for them.

5. It is expected of all who continue in these Societies, that they should continue to evidence their desire of salvation,

Secondly, by doing good, by being, in every kind, merciful after their power; as they have opportunity, doing good of every possible sort, and as far as is possible, to all men;—to their bodies, of the ability which God giveth, by giving food to the hungry, by clothing the naked, by visiting or helping them that are sick, or in prison;—to their souls, by instructing, reproving, or exhorting all they have any intercourse with; trampling under foot that enthusiastic doctrine of devils, that "we are not to do good unless our heart be free to it:" by doing good especially to them that are of the household of faith, or groaning so to be; employing them preferably to others, buying one of another; helping each other in business; and so much the more, because the world will love its own, and them only: by all possible diligence and frugality, that the Gospel be not blamed: by running with patience the race that is set before them, "denying themselves and taking up their cross daily;" submitting to bear the reproach of Christ, to be as the filth and offscouring of the world; and looking that men should "say all manner of evil of them falsely for the Lord's sake."

6. It is expected of all who desire to continue in these Societies, that they should continue to evidence their desire of salvation,

Thirdly, by attending upon all the ordinances of God. Such are, the public worship of God; the ministry of the word, either read or expounded; the supper of the Lord; family and private prayer; searching the Scriptures; and fasting, or abstinence.

7. These are the General Rules of our Societies; all which we are taught of God to observe, even in His written word, the only rule, and the sufficient rule, both of our faith and practice. And all these, we know, His Spirit writes on every truly awakened heart. If there be any among us who observe them not, who habitually break any of them, let it be made known unto them who watch over that soul as they that must give an account. We will admonish him of the error of his ways; we will bear with him for a season: but then if he repent not, he hath no more place among us. We have delivered our own souls.

JOHN WESLEY,
CHARLES WESLEY.

May 1st, 1743.

M, page 641.—*Extracts from the Large Minutes.*

It is desired, that all things be considered as in the immediate presence of God; that every person speak freely whatever is in his heart.

Q. 1. How may we best improve the time of this Conference?

A. (1.) While we are conversing, let us have an especial care to set God always before us.

(2.) In the intermediate hours, let us redeem all the time we can for private exercises.

(3.) Therein let us give ourselves to prayer for one another, and for a blessing on this our labour.

Q. 2. Have our Conferences been as useful as they might have been?

A. No: we have been continually straitened for time. Hence, scarce any thing has been

searched to the bottom. To remedy this, let every Conference last nine days, concluding on Wednesday in the second week.

Q. 3. What may we reasonably believe to be God's design in raising up the preachers called Methodists?

A. Not to form any new sect, but to reform the nation, particularly the Church; and to spread scriptural holiness over the land.

Q. 4. What was the rise of Methodism, so called?

A. In 1729, two young men, reading the Bible, saw they could not be saved without holiness, followed after it, and incited others so to do. In 1737, they saw holiness comes by faith. They saw likewise, that men are justified before they are sanctified: but still holiness was their point.

God then thrust them out, utterly against their will, to raise a holy people. When Satan could no otherwise hinder this, he threw *Calvinism* in the way; and then, *Antinomianism*, which strikes directly at the root of all holiness.

Q. 5. Is it advisable for us to preach in as many places as we can, without forming any Societies?

A. By no means; we have made the trial in various places, and that for a considerable time; but all the seed has fallen as by the highway-side. There is scarce any fruit remaining.

Q. 6. Where should we endeavour to preach most?

A. (1.) Where there is the greatest number of quiet and willing hearers: (2.) Where there is most fruit.

Q. 7. Is field-preaching unlawful?

A. We conceive not. We do not know that it is contrary to any law either of God or man.

Q. 8. Have we not used it too sparingly?

A. It seems we have. (1.) Because our call is to save that which is lost: now we cannot expect them to seek *us*, therefore we should go and seek *them*. (2.) Because we are particularly called, by going into the highways and hedges, (which none else will do,) to compel them to come in. (3.) Because that reason against it is not good, "The house will hold all that come." The house may hold all that *come* to the house; but not all that would *come* to the field.

The greatest hindrance to this you are to expect from rich, or cowardly, or lazy Methodists. But regard them not, neither stewards, leaders, nor people. Whenever the weather will permit, go out in God's name into the most public places, and call all to repent and believe the Gospel; every Sunday in particular; especially where there are old Societies, lest they settle upon their lees.

The stewards will frequently oppose this, lest they lose their usual collection. But this is not a sufficient reason against it. Shall we barter souls for money?

Q. 9. Ought we not diligently to observe, in what places God is pleased at any time to pour out His Spirit more abundantly?

A. We ought, and at that time to send more labourers than usual into that part of the harvest.

But whence shall we have them? (1.) So far as we can afford it, we will keep a reserve of preachers at Kingswood: (2.) Let an exact list be kept of those who are proposed for trial, but not accepted.

Q. 10. How often shall we permit strangers to be present at the meeting of the Society?

A. At every other meeting of the Society in every place, let no stranger be admitted. At other times they may; but the same person not above twice or thrice. In order to this, see that all, in every place, show their tickets before they come in. If the stewards and leaders are not exact herein, employ others that have more resolution.

Q. 11. How may the leaders of classes be made more useful?

A. (1.) Let each of them be diligently examined concerning his method of meeting a class. Let this be done with all possible exactness at the next quarterly visitation. And in order to this, allow sufficient time for the visiting of each Society.

(2.) Let each leader carefully inquire how every soul in his class prospers. Not only how

each person observes the outward rules, but how he grows in the knowledge and love of God.

(3.) Let the leaders converse with the assistant frequently and freely.

Q. 26. What are the rules of an helper?

A. (1.) Be diligent. Never be unemployed a moment. Never be trifingly employed. Never while away time: neither spend any more time at any place than is strictly necessary.

(2.) Be serious. Let your motto be, Holiness to the Lord. Avoid all lightness, jesting, and foolish talking.

(3.) Converse sparingly and cautiously with women: particularly with young women.

(4.) Take no step toward marriage, without first consulting with your brethren.

(5.) Believe evil of no one; unless you see it done, take heed how you credit it. Put the best construction on every thing. You know the judge is always supposed to be on the prisoner's side.

(6.) Speak evil of no one: else your word especially would eat as doth a canker: keep your thoughts within your own breast, till you come to the person concerned.

(7.) Tell every one what you think wrong in him, and that plainly, as soon as may be: else it will fester in your heart. Make all haste to cast the fire out of your bosom.

(8.) Do not affect the gentleman. You have no more to do with this character, than with that of a dancing-master. A preacher of the Gospel is the servant of all.

(9.) Be ashamed of nothing but sin; not of fetching wood (if time permit) or drawing water: not of cleaning your own shoes, or your neighbour's.

(10.) Be punctual. Do every thing exactly at the time. And in general, do not *mend* our rules, but *keep* them: not for wrath, but for conscience' sake.

(11.) You have nothing to do but to save souls. Therefore spend and be spent in this work. And go always, not only to those that want you, but to those that want you most.

Observe: It is not your business, to preach so many times, and to take care of this or that Society: but to save as many souls as you can; to bring as many sinners as you possibly can to repentance, and with all your power to build them up in that holiness, without which they cannot see the Lord. And remember! A Methodist preacher is to mind every point, great and small, in the Methodist discipline! Therefore you will need all the sense you have, and to have all your wits about you!

(12.) Act in all things, not according to your own will, but as a son in the Gospel. As such it is your part to employ your time in the manner which we direct: partly, in preaching and visiting from house to house; partly, in reading, meditation, and prayer. Above all, if you labour with us in our Lord's vineyard, it is needful that you do that part of the work which we advise, at those times and places which we judge most for His glory.

Q. 48. Do we sufficiently watch over our helpers?

A. We might consider those that are with us as our pupils; into whose behaviour and studies we should inquire every day. Should we not frequently ask each, Do you walk closely with God? Have you now fellowship with the Father and the Son? At what hour do you rise? Do you punctually observe the morning and evening hour of retirement? Do you spend the day in the manner which we advise? Do you converse seriously, usefully, and closely? To be more particular: Do you use all the means of grace yourself, and enforce the use of them on all other persons?

They are either instituted or prudential:—

1. The INSTITUTED are,

(1.) Prayer; private, family, public; consisting of deprecation, petition, intercession, and thanksgiving. Do you use each of these? Do you use private prayer every morning and evening? if you can, at five in the evening; and the hour before or after morning preaching? Do you forecast daily, wherever you are, how to secure these hours? Do you avow it everywhere? Do you ask everywhere, "Have you family prayer?" Do you retire at five o'clock?

(2.) Searching the Scriptures by,

(i.) Reading: constantly, some part of every day; regularly, all the Bible in order; carefully, with the Notes; seriously, with prayer before and after; fruitfully, immediately practising what you learn there?

(ii.) Meditating: at set times? by any rule?

(iii.) Hearing: every morning? carefully; with prayer before, at, after; immediately putting in practice? Have you a New Testament always about you?

(3.) The Lord's supper: do you use this at every opportunity? with solemn prayer before; with earnest and deliberate self-devotion?

(4.) Fasting: how do you fast every Friday?

(5.) Christian confidence: are you convinced how important and how difficult it is to "order your conversation aright?" Is it "always in grace? seasoned with salt? meet to minister grace to the hearers?" Do not you converse too long at a time. Is not an hour commonly enough? Would it not be well always to have a determinate end in view; and to pray before and after it?

II. PRUDENTIAL MEANS we may use either as common Christians, as Methodists, as preachers, or as assistants.

(1.) As common Christians. What particular rules have you in order to grow in grace? What arts of holy living?

(2.) As Methodists. Do you never miss your class, or band?

(3.) As preachers. Do you meet every Society; also the leaders and bands, if any?

(4.) As assistants. Have you thoroughly considered your office; and do you make a conscience of executing every part of it?

These means may be used without fruit: but there are some means which cannot; namely, watching, denying ourselves, taking up our cross, exercise of the presence of God.

(1.) Do you steadily watch against the world, the devil, yourselves, your besetting sin?

(2.) Do you deny yourself every useless pleasure of sense, imagination, honour? Are you temperate in all things? Instance in food: do you use only that kind and that degree which is best both for your body and soul? Do you see the necessity of this?

(3.) Do you eat no flesh suppers? no late suppers?

(4.) Do you eat no more at each meal than is necessary? Are you not heavy or drowsy after dinner?

(5.) Do you use only that kind and that degree of drink which is best both for your body and soul?

(6.) Do you drink water? Why not? Did you ever? Why did you leave it off? If not for health, when will you begin again? to-day?

(7.) How often do you drink wine or ale? every-day? Do you want it?

(8.) Wherein do you "take up your cross daily?" Do you cheerfully bear your cross (whatever is grievous to nature) as a gift of God, and labour to profit thereby?

(9.) Do you endeavour to set God always before you; to see His eye continually fixed upon you? Never can you use these means, but a blessing will ensue. And the more you use them, the more you will grow in grace.

Q. 49. What can be done, in order to a closer union of our helpers with each other?

A. (1.) Let them be deeply convinced of the want there is of it at present, and the absolute necessity of it.

(2.) Let them pray for a desire of union.

(3.) Let them speak freely to each other.

(4.) When they meet, let them never part without prayer.

(5.) Let them beware how they despise each other's gifts.

(6.) Let them never speak slightingly of each other in any kind.

(7.) Let them defend one another's characters in everything, so far as consists with truth: and,

(8.) Let them labour in honour each to prefer the other before himself.

Q. 50. How shall we try those who think they are moved by the Holy Ghost to preach?

A. Inquire, (1.) Do they know God as a pardoning God? Have they the love of God abiding in them? Do they desire and seek nothing but God? And are they holy in all manner of conversation? (2.) Have they gifts (as well as grace) for the work? Have they (in some tolerable degree) a clear, sound understanding? Have they a right judgment in the things of God? Have they a just conception of salvation by faith? And has God

given them any degree of utterance? Do they speak justly, readily, clearly? (3.) Have they fruit? Are any truly convinced of sin, and converted to God, by their preaching?

As long as these three marks concur in any one, we believe he is called of God to preach. These we receive as sufficient proof that he is "moved thereto by the Holy Ghost."

Q. 51. What method may we use in receiving a new helper?

A. A proper time for doing this is at a Conference, after solemn fasting and prayer.

Every person proposed is then to be present; and each of them may be asked,—Have you faith in Christ? Are you "going on to perfection?" Do you expect to be "perfected in love" in this life? Are you groaning after it? Are you resolved to devote yourself wholly to God and to His work? Do you know the Methodist Plan? Have you read the "Plain Account?" The "Appeals?" Do you know the rules of the Society? Of the bands? Do you keep them? Do you take no snuff, tobacco, drams? Do you constantly attend the church and sacrament? Have you read the "Minutes of the Conference?" Are you willing to conform to them? Have you considered the Rules of a Helper? especially the first, tenth, and twelfth? Will you keep them for conscience' sake? Are you determined to employ all your time in the work of God? Will you preach every morning and evening; endeavouring not to speak too long, or too loud? Will you diligently instruct the children in every place? Will you visit from house to house? Will you recommend fasting, both by precept and example?

Are you in debt? Are you engaged to marry?

(N.B. A preacher who marries while on trial, is thereby set aside.)

We may then receive him as a probationer, by giving him the "Minutes of the Conference," inscribed thus:—

"To A. B.

"You think it your duty to call sinners to repentance. Make full proof hereof, and we shall rejoice to receive you as a fellow-labourer."

Let him then read, and carefully weigh what is contained therein, that if he has any doubt, it may be removed.

Observe! Taking on trial is entirely different from admitting a preacher. One on trial may be either admitted or rejected, without doing him any wrong. Otherwise it would be no trial at all. Let every assistant explain this to them that are on trial.

When he has been on trial four years, if recommended by the assistant, he may be received into full connexion, by giving him the "Minutes," inscribed thus: "As long as you freely consent to, and earnestly endeavour to walk by, these Rules, we shall rejoice to acknowledge you as a fellow-labourer." Meantime, let none exhort in any of our Societies, without a note of permission from the assistant. Let every exhorter take care to have this renewed yearly; and let every assistant insist upon it.

Q. 52. What is the method wherein we usually proceed in our Conferences?

A. We inquire,

(1.) What preachers are admitted? Who remain on trial? Who are admitted on trial? Who desist from travelling?

(2.) Are there any objections to any of the preachers? who are named one by one.

(3.) How are the preachers stationed this year?

(4.) What numbers are in the Society?

(5.) What is the Kingswood collection?

(6.) What boys are received this year?

(7.) What girls are assisted?

(8.) What is contributed for the contingent expenses?

(9.) How was this expended?

(10.) What is contributed toward the fund for superannuated and supernumerary preachers?

(11.) What demands are there upon it?

(12.) How many preachers' wives are to be provided for? By what Societies?

(13.) Where and when may our next Conference begin?

Q. 55. How can we account for the decrease of the work of God in some Circuits, both this year and the last?

A. It may be owing either, (1.) To the want of zeal and exactness in the assistant, occasioning want of discipline throughout; or, (2.) To want of life and diligence in the preachers; or, (3.) To our people's losing the life of God, and sinking into the spirit of the world.

It may be owing, farther, to the want of more field-preaching, and of trying more new places.

N, page 666.—*List of Works revised and abridged from various Authors by the Rev. John Wesley, M.A.*

1. THE Christian's Pattern; or, a Treatise of the Imitation of Christ. Written originally in Latin, by Thomas à Kempis. With a Preface, containing an account of the usefulness of this Treatise, directions for reading it with advantage, and likewise an account of this edition. Compared with the original, and corrected throughout, by JOHN WESLEY, M.A., Fellow of Lincoln College, Oxon. 8vo., pp. 319. 1735.

2. Two Treatises: the first, on Justification by Faith only, according to the Eleventh Article of the Church of England: the second, on the Sinfulness of Man's natural Will, and his utter inability to do works acceptable to God, until he be justified, and born again of the Spirit of God; according to the doctrine of our Ninth, Tenth, Twelfth, and Thirteenth Articles. They are part of the works of the learned and judicious Dr. Barnes, who had been for many years famous as a great reviver of learning in the University of Cambridge. He afterwards became a Protestant, and was martyred for the faith in Smithfield, in the year 1541. To which is prefixed a Preface, containing some Account of the Life and Death of Dr. Barnes, extracted from the Book of Martyrs, by JOHN WESLEY, A.M., Fellow of Lincoln College, Oxford. 12mo., pp. 99. 1739.

3. Serious Considerations concerning the Doctrines of Election and Reprobation. Extracted from a late Author. 12mo., pp. 12. 1740.

4. The Scripture Doctrine concerning Predestination, Election, and Reprobation. Extracted from a late Author. By JOHN WESLEY, M.A., Fellow of Lincoln College, Oxford. 12mo., pp. 16. 1741.

5. Serious Considerations on Absolute Predestination. Extracted from a late Author. 12mo., pp. 24. 1741.

6. Reflections upon the Conduct of Human Life: with Reference to Learning and Knowledge. Extracted from Mr. Norris. The Second Edition. 12mo., pp. 36. 1741.

7. An Extract of the Christian's Pattern: or, a Treatise of the Imitation of Christ. Written in Latin, by Thomas à Kempis. Published by JOHN WESLEY, A.M., Fellow of Lincoln College, Oxford. 12mo., pp. 130. 1741.

8. An Extract of the Life and Death of Mr. Thomas Haliburton. 12mo., pp. 92. 1741.

9. An Extract of the Life of Monsieur de Renty, a late Nobleman in France. Published by JOHN WESLEY, M.A., Fellow of Lincoln College, Oxford. 12mo., pp. 67. 1741.

10. A short Account of Mrs. Hannah Richardson. 12mo. Fourth Edition. 1741.

11. A practical Treatise on Christian Perfection. Extracted from a late Author. By JOHN WESLEY, M.A., Fellow of Lincoln College, Oxon. 12mo., pp. 115. 1743.

12. A serious Call to a Holy Life. Extracted from a late Author. By JOHN WESLEY, M.A., Fellow of Lincoln College, Oxford. 12mo., pp. 230. 1744.

13. Extract of Count Zinzendorf's Discourses on the Redemption of Man by the Death of Christ. By JOHN WESLEY, M.A., Fellow of Lincoln College, Oxford. 12mo., pp. 78. 1744.

14. The Life of God in the Soul of Man: or, the Nature and Excellency of the Christian Religion. Abridged by JOHN WESLEY, M.A. 12mo., pp. 48. 1744.

15. A brief Account of the Occasion, Process, and Issue of a late Trial at the Assize held at Gloucester, the third of March, 1743, between some of the People called Methodists, Plaintiffs, and certain Persons of the Town of Minchin-Hampton, in the said County, Defendants Extracted from Mr. Whitefield's Letter. By JOHN WESLEY, M.A., Fellow of Lincoln College, Oxford. 12mo., pp. 12. 1744.

16. A Narrative of the late Work of God at and near Northampton, in New-England. Extracted from Mr. Edwards's Letter to Dr. Coleman. By JOHN WESLEY, M.A., Fellow of Lincoln College, Oxford. 12mo., pp. 48.

17. The distinguishing Marks of a Work of the Spirit of God. Extracted from Mr. Edwards, Minister of Northampton, in New-England. By JOHN WESLEY, M.A., Fellow of Lincoln College, Oxford. 12mo., pp. 48. 1744.

18. Thoughts concerning the present Revival of Religion in New-England. By Jonathan Edwards, A.M., Pastor of the Church of Christ at Northampton. Abridged by JOHN WESLEY, M.A., Fellow of Lincoln College, Oxford. 12mo., pp. 124. 1745.

19. The Case of John Nelson. Written by Himself. 12mo., pp. 36. 1745.

20. An Extract of Mr. Richard Baxter's Aphorisms of Justification. Published by JOHN WESLEY, A.M., Fellow of Lincoln College, Oxford. 12mo., pp. 36. 1745.

21. The Nature and Design of Christianity. Extracted from a late Author. The Fifth Edition. 12mo., pp. 16. 1746.

22. Lessons for Children. [In Three Parts.] 12mo., pp. 76, 108, 124. 1746.

23. A short Account of the Death of Samuel Hitchens. By James Hitchens, Tinner. 12mo., pp. 11. 1746.

24. Instructions for Children. The Third Edition. 12mo., pp. 36. 1747.

25. A short Account of the Death of Thomas Hitchens. By James Hitchens, Tinner. 12mo., pp. 12. 1747.

26. A Companion for the Altar. Extracted from Thomas à Kempis. By JOHN WESLEY, M.A., Fellow of Lincoln College, Oxon. The Fourth Edition. 12mo., pp. 24. 1743.

27. A Word of Advice to Saints and Sinners. Fourth Edition. 12mo., pp. 12. 1748.

28. The Doctrine of Salvation, Faith, and Good Works. Extracted from the Homilies of the Church of England. The Tenth Edition. 12mo., pp. 12. 1748.

29. Thomæ à Kempis de Christo imitando Libri Tres. Interprete Sebast. Castellione. In Usum Juventutis Christianæ. Edidit Ecclesiæ Anglicanæ Presbyter. 12mo., pp. 143. 1748.

30. Historiæ et Præcepta selecta. In Usum Juventutis Christianæ. Edidit Ecclesiæ Anglicanæ Presbyter. 12mo., pp. 79. 1748.

31. Desiderii Erasmi Colloquia selecta. In Usum Juventutis Christianæ. Edidit Ecclesiæ Anglicanæ Presbyter. 12mo., pp. 85. 1750.

32. Phædri Fabulæ selectæ. In Usum Juventutis Christianæ. Edidit Ecclesiæ Anglicanæ Presbyter. 12mo., pp. 35. 1750.

33. Mathurini Corderii Colloquia selecta. In Usum Juventutis Christianæ. Edidit Ecclesiæ Anglicanæ Presbyter. 12mo., pp. 51. 1748.

34. Instructiones et Prælectiones Pueriles. In Usum Juventutis Christianæ. Edidit Ecclesiæ Anglicanæ Presbyter. 12mo., pp. 39. 1748.

35. Excerpta ex Ovidio, Virgilio, Horatio, Juvenali, Persio, et Martiali. In Usum Juventutis Christianæ. Edidit Ecclesiæ Anglicanæ Presbyter. 12mo., pp. 242. 1749.

36. Caii Sallustii Crispi Bellum Catalinarium et Jugurthinum. In Usum Juventutis Christianæ. Edidit Ecclesiæ Anglicanæ Presbyter. 12mo., pp. 110. 1749.

37. Cornelii Nepotis excellentium Imperatorum Vitæ. In Usum Juventutis Christianæ. Edidit Ecclesiæ Anglicanæ Presbyter. 12mo., pp. 100. 1749.

38. Nicodemus: or, a Treatise on the Fear of Man. Written in German by August Herman Franck. Abridged by JOHN WESLEY, M.A., Fellow of Lincoln College, Oxford. The Fourth Edition. 12mo., pp. 32. 1749.

39. A Treatise on Christian Prudence. Extracted from Mr. Norris. By JOHN WESLEY, A.M., Fellow of Lincoln College, Oxon. The Third Edition. 12mo., pp. 35. 1749.

40. The Manners of the Ancient Christians. Extracted from a French Author. By JOHN WESLEY, A.M., Fellow of Lincoln College, Oxford. 12mo., pp. 24. 1749.

41. A Christian Library: consisting of Extracts from, and Abridgments of, the Choicest Pieces of practical Divinity which have been published in the English Tongue. In Fifty Volumes. By JOHN WESLEY, M.A., Fellow of Lincoln College, Oxford. 12mo. 1749–1755.

42. Thoughts upon Infant Baptism. Extracted from a late Writer. 12mo., pp. 21. 1751.

43. Some Account of the Life and Death of Matthew Lee, executed at Tyburn, October 11th, 1752; in the 20th year of his Age. 12mo., pp. 24. 1752.

44. An Extract of the Life and Death of Mr. John Janeway, Fellow of King's College, in Cambridge. By JOHN WESLEY, M.A. 12mo., pp. 35. 1753.

45. The Complete English Dictionary, explaining most of those Hard Words which are found in the best English Writers. By a Lover of Good English, and Common Sense. N.B. The Author assures you, he thinks this is the best English Dictionary in the World. 12mo. 1753.

46. The Trial of Spirits, both in Teachers and Hearers. Wherein is held forth the clear Discovery of all that are carnal and antichristian Teachers in these Nations: testified from the Word of God, before the University Congregations in Cambridge. By the Rev. Mr. W. D., Master of Gonvil and Caius College, Cambridge. Extracted by a Member of the Church of England. 12mo., pp. 31. 1753.

47. Explanatory Notes upon the New Testament. By JOHN WESLEY, M.A., late Fellow of Lincoln College, Oxford. 4to., pp. 765. 1755.

48. A Preservative against Unsettled Notions in Religion. By JOHN WESLEY, M.A. 12mo., pp. 246. 1758.

49. An Extract of a Short and Easy Method with the Deists. 12mo., pp. 12. 1758.

50. A Treatise concerning the Godhead of Jesus Christ. Translated from the French. 12mo., pp. 36. 1758.

51. A short Exposition of the Ten Commandments. Extracted from Bishop Hopkins. 12mo., pp. 96. 1759.

52. Christian Instructions, extracted from a late French Author. 12mo., pp. 54. 1760.

53. Directions for Married Persons: describing the Duties common to both, and peculiar to each of them. By William Whateley. 12mo., pp. 70. 1760.

54. The Desideratum: or, Electricity made plain and useful. By a Lover of Mankind, and of Common Sense. 12mo., pp. 72. 1760.

55. The Life and Death of Mr. Thomas Walsh, composed in great part from the Accounts left by Himself. By James Morgan, a Member of the Church of England. 12mo., pp. 270. 1762.

56. Letters wrote by Jane Cooper. To which is prefixed, some Account of her Life and Death. 12mo., pp. 41.

57. Explanatory Notes upon the Old Testament. By JOHN WESLEY, M.A., late Fellow of Lincoln College, Oxford. In Three Volumes. 4to. 1765.

58. A Treatise on Justification: extracted from Mr. John Goodwin, by JOHN WESLEY. With a Preface: wherein all that is material in Letters just published under the name of the Rev. Mr. Hervey is answered. 12mo., pp. 207. 1765.

59. The Pilgrim's Progress from this World to that which is to come. Abridged by JOHN WESLEY, M.A. The Fifth Edition. 12mo., pp. 52. 1766.

60. Extracts from the Letters of Mr. Samuel Rutherford. By the Rev. JOHN WESLEY, M.A., sometime Fellow of Lincoln College, Oxford. 12mo.

61. Christian Letters, by Joseph Alleine. The Fourth Edition. 12mo., pp. 80. 1767.

62. An Extract of the Life of the late Rev. Mr. David Brainerd, Missionary to the Indians. By JOHN WESLEY, M.A. 12mo., pp. 274. 1768.

63. Advice with respect to Health. Extracted from a late Author. 12mo., pp. 218. 1769.

64. An Extract of Letters on Religious Subjects. By Mrs. Lefevre. 12mo., pp. 106. 1769.

65. Some Account of the Experience of E. J. 12mo., pp. 11. 1770.

66. The Christian Sacrament and Sacrifice. Extracted from Dr. Brevint. The Sixth Edition. 12mo., pp. 32. 1771.

67. Directions to Children and Servants. 12mo., pp. 38. 1771.

68. An Extract from Mr. Law's Case of Reason, or Natural Religion, fairly and fully stated, in Answer to a Book entitled, Christianity as Old as the Creation. 12mo., pp. 107. 1772.

69. An Extract from Mr. Law's Serious Answer to Dr. Trapp's Four Sermons on the Sin, Folly, and Danger of being Righteous overmuch. 12mo., pp. 63. 1772.

70. Some Animadversions upon Dr. Trapp's late Reply. 12mo., pp. 52. 1772.

71. A short, but sufficient, Confutation of Bishop Warburton's projected Defence (as he calls it) of Christianity, in his "Divine Legation of Moses." In a Letter to the Lord Bishop of London. 12mo., pp. 80. 1772.

72. An Extract from Mr. Law's Spirit of Prayer. 12mo., pp. 106. 1772.

73. An Extract from Mr. Law's Spirit of Love. 12mo., pp. 57. 1772.

74. An Extract from Mr. Law's Letters. 12mo., pp. 65. 1772.

75. An Extract from Mr. Law's Address to the Clergy. Published a little after his Death. 12mo., pp. 45. 1772.

76. An Extract of Miss Mary Gilbert's Journal. 12mo., pp. 91. 1772.

77. An Extract from the Journal of Elizabeth Harper. 12mo., pp. 58. 1772.

78. A short Account of Ann Johnson. By John Johnson. 12mo., pp. 11. 1772.

79. A short Account of Ann Rogers. By John Johnson. 12mo., pp. 13. 1772.

80. A short Account of the Death of Mary Langson, of Taxall, in Cheshire; who died January 29th, 1769. 12mo., pp. 11. 1772.

81. A Letter to the Rev. Mr. John Wesley. By a Gentlewoman. 12mo., pp. 20. 1772.

82. An Extract of Two Discourses on the Conflagration and Renovation of the World. Written by James Knight, D.D., late Vicar of St. Sepulchre, London. 12mo., pp. 31. 1773.

83. A short Account of John Dillon. 12mo., pp. 13. 1773.

84. Christian Reflections. Translated from the French. 12mo., pp. 60. 1773.

85. Instructions for Members of Religious Societies. Translated from the French. 12mo., pp. 50. 1773.

86. An Extract from Dr. Cadogan's Dissertation on the Gout, and all Chronic Diseases. 12mo., pp. 49. 1774.

87. A Treatise on Religious Affections: In Three Parts. Part I. Containing the Nature of the Affections, and their Importance in Religion. Part II. Showing what are no certain Signs that Religious Affections are gracious, or that they are not. Part III. Showing what are distinguishing Signs of truly gracious and holy Affections. By the Rev. JONATHAN EDWARDS, A.M., President of the College of New-Jersey. Abridged by the Rev. JOHN WESLEY. 12mo., pp. 69. 1773.

88. A Short Roman History. 12mo., pp. 155. 1773.

89. A Collection of Forms of Prayer for every Day in the Week. The Sixth Edition. 12mo., pp. 76. 1775.

90. A Short Account of the Life and Death of Nathanael Othen, who was shot in Dover Castle, October 26th, 1757. 12mo., pp. 12. 1775.

91. Some Account of the Life and Death of Nicholas Mooney. 12mo., pp. 36. 1776.

92. A Concise History of England, from the Earliest Times, to the Death of George II. By JOHN WESLEY, A.M. In Four Volumes. 12mo. 1776.

93. An Extract of the Life of Madam Guion. By JOHN WESLEY, M.A. 12mo., pp. 230. 1776.

94. A Short Account of the Death of Elizabeth Hindmarsh, who died September 6th, 1777; in the Twenty-First Year of her Age. The Third Edition. 12mo., pp. 12. 1778.

95. A Survey of the Wisdom of God in the Creation; or, A Compendium of Natural Philosophy. In Five Volumes. By JOHN WESLEY, A.M. 12mo. 1778.

96. A Brief Narrative of the Revival of Religion in Virginia. In a Letter to a Friend. The Fourth Edition. 12mo., pp. 35. 1779.

97. A Word to whom it may Concern. 12mo., pp. 17. 1779.

98. The Arminian Magazine: consisting of Extracts and Original Treatises on Universal Redemption. Fourteen Volumes. 8vo. 1778–1791.

99. The Saints' Everlasting Rest; or, A Treatise on the Blessed State of the Saints in their Enjoyment of God in Glory. Extracted from the Works of Mr. Baxter. By JOHN WESLEY, A.M., late Fellow of Lincoln College, Oxford. 12mo., pp. 335.

100. The History of Henry Earl of Moreland. Abridged by the Rev. JOHN WESLEY, M.A. In Two Volumes. 12mo. 1781.

101. Reflections on the Rise and Progress of the American Rebellion. 12mo., pp. 96. 1780.

102. An Account of the Conduct of the War in the Middle Colonies. Extracted from a late Author. 12mo., pp. 55. 1780.

103. An Extract from a Reply to the Observations of Lieut.-General Sir William Howe, on a Pamphlet, entitled, Letters to a Nobleman. 12mo., pp. 104. 1781.

104. An Extract of a Letter to the Right Honourable Viscount H**e, on his Naval Conduct in the American War. 12mo., pp. 27. 1781.

105. A Concise Ecclesiastical History, from the Birth of Christ, to the Beginning of the present Century. In Four Volumes. 12mo. 1781.

106. A Call to the Unconverted. By Richard Baxter. 12mo., pp. 76. 1783.

107. Directions for renewing our Covenant with God. The Third Edition. 12mo., pp. 23. 1784.

108. The Sunday Service of the Methodists in the United States of America. With other Occasional Services. 12mo. 1784.

109. The Doctrine of Original Sin. Extracted from a late Author. 12mo., pp. 40. 1784.

110. The Life of Gregory Lopez: Written originally in Spanish. Abridged by the Rev. JOHN WESLEY, A.M., sometime Fellow of Lincoln College, Oxford. 18mo., pp. 63.

111. The Christian's Pattern; or, A Treatise on the Imitation of Christ. Written in Latin by Thomas à Kempis. Abridged, and published in English, by the Rev. JOHN WESLEY, A.M., sometime Fellow of Lincoln College, Oxford. 24mo., pp. 218.

112. A Short Account of the Life and Death of the Rev. John Fletcher. 1787.

113. The Life of Silas Told. Written by Himself. 18mo., pp. 113. Second Edition. 1790.

114. A Short Account of God's Dealings with T. Hogg. 12mo.

115. The Spirit of Prayer. 12mo., pp. 24.

116. The New Testament; with an Analysis of the several Books and Chapters. By the Rev. JOHN WESLEY, M.A. 12mo., pp. 424. 1790.

117. A Short Account of the Life and Death of Jane Newland, of Dublin; who departed this Life October 22nd, 1789. Third Edition. 12mo., pp. 12. 1790.

118. Conjectures concerning the Nature of Future Happiness. Translated from the French of Mons. Bonnet, of Geneva. 12mo., pp. 24. 1790.

119. Primitive Physic; or, An Easy and Natural Method of Curing most Diseases. By JOHN WESLEY, M.A. The Twenty-Third Edition. 12mo., pp. 118. 1791.

List of Poetical Works published by the Rev. Messrs. John and Charles Wesley. 1741

1. A COLLECTION of Psalms and Hymns. 12mo., pp. 84. 1738.

2. Hymns and Sacred Poems. Published by JOHN WESLEY, M.A., Fellow of Lincoln College, Oxford; and CHARLES WESLEY, M.A., Student of Christ Church, Oxford. 12mo., pp. 223. 1739.

3. Hymns and Sacred Poems. Published by JOHN WESLEY, M.A., Fellow of Lincoln College, Oxford; and CHARLES WESLEY, M.A., Student of Christ Church, Oxford. The Second Edition. 12mo., pp. 160. 1739.

4. Hymns and Sacred Poems. Published by JOHN WESLEY, M.A., Fellow of Lincoln College, Oxford; and CHARLES WESLEY, M.A., Student of Christ Church, Oxford. 12mo., pp. 209. 1740.

5. Hymns and Sacred Poems. By JOHN WESLEY, M.A., Fellow of Lincoln College, Oxford; and CHARLES WESLEY, M.A., Student of Christ Church, Oxford. The Second Edition. 12mo., pp. 300. 1745.

6. Hymns on God's Everlasting Love. To which is added, The Cry of a Reprobate. 12mo., pp. 36. 1741.

7. A Collection of Moral and Sacred Poems from the most Celebrated English Authors. By JOHN WESLEY, M.A., Fellow of Lincoln College, Oxford. In Three Volumes. 12mo. 1744.

8. Hymns for the Watch-Night. 12mo., pp. 12.

9. An Elegy on the Death of Robert Jones, Esq., of Fonmon Castle, in Glamorganshire, South Wales. 12mo., pp. 22. 1744.

10. Hymns on the Lord's Supper. By JOHN WESLEY, M.A., Fellow of Lincoln College, Oxford; and CHARLES WESLEY, M.A., Student of Christ Church, Oxford. With a Pre-

face, concerning the Christian Sacrament and Sacrifice, extracted from Dr. Brevint. 12mo., pp. 141. 1745.

11. Hymns for the Nativity of our Lord. The Second Edition. 12mo., pp. 24. 1745.

12. Hymns for our Lord's Resurrection. The Third Edition. 12mo., pp. 24. 1748.

13. Hymns for Ascension-Day. The Second Edition. 12mo., pp. 12. 1747.

14. Hymns of Petition and Thanksgiving for the Promise of the Father. By the Rev. Mr. JOHN and CHARLES WESLEY. The Second Edition. 12mo., pp. 36. 1747.

15. Gloria Patri, &c.; or, Hymns to the Trinity. The Sixth Edition. 12mo., pp. 11. 1746.

16. Hymns for the Public Thanksgiving Day, October 9th, 1746. 12mo., pp. 12. 1746.

17. A Collection of Psalms and Hymns. Published by JOHN WESLEY, M.A., Fellow of Lincoln College, Oxford; and CHARLES WESLEY, M.A., Student of Christ Church, Oxford. The Fourth Edition enlarged. 12mo., pp. 148. 1748.

18. Hymns and Sacred Poems. In Two Volumes. By CHARLES WESLEY, M.A., Student of Christ Church, Oxford. 12mo., pp. 335, 338. 1749.

19. An Epistle to the Rev. Mr. John Wesley. By CHARLES WESLEY, Presbyter of the Church of England. 12mo., pp. 12. 1755.

20. Hymns occasioned by the Earthquake, March 8th, 1750. To which is added, An Hymn upon the Pouring out of the Seventh Vial, Rev. xvi., xvii., &c., occasioned by the Destruction of Lisbon. Part I. The Second Edition. 12mo., pp. 12. 1756.

21. Hymns occasioned by the Earthquake, March 8th, 1750. To which is added, An Hymn for the English in America, and another for the Year 1756. Part II. The Second Edition. 12mo., pp. 24. 1756.

22. Hymns for the Year 1756. Particularly for the Fast-Day, February 6th. 12mo., pp. 24.

23. Hymns for Times of Trouble and Persecution. By JOHN and CHARLES WESLEY, Presbyters of the Church of England. The Third Edition enlarged. 12mo., pp. 83. 1756.

24. Hymns for Times of Trouble. 12mo., pp. 12.

25. Hymns of Intercession for all Mankind. 12mo., pp. 34. 1758.

26. Hymns for the Expected Invasion, 1759. 12mo., pp. 12.

27. Hymns for those to whom Christ is All in All. 12mo., pp. 144. 1761.

28. Short Hymns on Select Passages of the Holy Scriptures. By CHARLES WESLEY, M.A., and Presbyter of the Church of England. In Two Volumes. 12mo., pp. 392, 432. 1762.

29. Graces before and after Meat. 12mo., pp. 12.

30. An Extract from Milton's Paradise Lost. With Notes. 18mo., pp. 320. 1763.

31. Select Hymns: With Tunes annexed: Designed chiefly for the Use of the People called Methodists. Second Edition, corrected and enlarged. 12mo., pp. 159. 1765.

32. Hymns for New Year's Day. 12mo., pp. 11. 1766.

33. Hymns for the Use of Families, and on Various Occasions. By CHARLES WESLEY, M.A., late Student of Christ Church. 12mo., pp. 176. 1767.

34. Hymns for Children, and others of Riper Years. 12mo., pp. 84. 1762.

35. Hymns on the Trinity. 12mo., pp. 132. 1768.

36. Funeral Hymns. 12mo., pp. 70. 1769.

37. Hymns for those that seek, and those that have, Redemption in the Blood of Jesus Christ. The Eighth Edition. 12mo., pp. 68. 1769.

38. Funeral Hymns. 12mo., pp. 24. Fifth Edition. 1770.

39. An Elegy on the late Rev. George Whitefield, M.A. 12mo. 1770.

40. An Extract from Dr. Young's Night Thoughts on Life, Death, and Immortality. 12mo., pp. 241. 1770.

41. Preparation for Death, in several Hymns. 12mo., pp. 46. 1772.

42. Select Parts of Mr. Herbert's Sacred Poems. 12mo., pp. 32. 1773.

43. Hymns and Spiritual Songs, intended for the Use of Christians of all Denominations. Published by JOHN and CHARLES WESLEY. The Twenty-first Edition. 12mo., pp. 136. 1777.

44. A Collection of Hymns, for the Use of the People called Methodists. 12mo., pp. 520. 1780.

45. Hymns written in the Time of the Tumults, June, 1780. 12mo., pp. 19. 1780.

46. Hymns for the Fast-Day. The Fourth Edition. 12mo., pp. 24. 1780.

47. The Protestant Association; written in the midst of the Tumults, June, 1780. 12mo., pp. 34.

48. Hymns for the Nation, in 1782. In Two Parts. 12mo., pp. 47.

49. Prayers for Condemned Malefactors. 12mo., pp. 12. 1785.

50. A Pocket Hymn-Book for the Use of Christians of all Denominations. 24mo., pp. 208. 1785.

51. A Pocket Hymn-Book for the Use of Christians of all Denominations. 24mo., pp. 240. 1787.

52. A small Pocket Hymn-Book for the Use of Children. 1788.

Musical Works published by the Rev. John Wesley, M.A.

1. A Collection of Tunes, set to Music, as they are sung at the Foundery. 12mo., pp. 36. 1742.

2. The Grounds of Vocal Music. 12mo., pp. 12.

3. Sacred Harmony; or, A Choice Collection of Psalms and Hymns, set to Music, in Two and Three Parts, for the Voice, Harpsichord, and Organ. 12mo., pp. 354. 1781.

4. Sacred Harmony; or, A Choice Collection of Psalm and Hymn Tunes, in Two or Three Parts, for the Voice, Harpsichord, and Organ. 12mo., pp. 157. 1789.

5. Sacred Melody; or, A Choice Collection of Psalm and Hymn Tunes: With a Short Introduction. 12mo., pp. 118.

END OF VOL. I.

Works by the same Author.

In Three Volumes, crown 8vo., (the Second and Third bound in Two Parts each,) price 34s.,

SACRED ANNALS:

OR, RESEARCHES INTO THE HISTORY AND RELIGION OF MANKIND, FROM THE CREATION TO THE TIME OF CHRIST.

VOL. I.—THE SECOND EDITION REVISED,

Complete in itself, and sold separately, handsomely bound in Cambric, Price 10s.,

THE PATRIARCHAL AGE:

OR, RESEARCHES INTO THE HISTORY AND RELIGION OF MANKIND, FROM THE CREATION OF THE WORLD TO THE DEATH OF ISAAC: DEDUCED FROM THE WRITINGS OF MOSES AND OTHER INSPIRED AUTHORS, COPIOUSLY ILLUSTRATED AND CONFIRMED BY THE ANCIENT RECORDS, TRADITIONS, AND MYTHOLOGY OF THE HEATHEN WORLD.

SACRED ANNALS:

VOL. II.

Complete in itself, and sold separately, handsomely bound in Cambric, in Two Parts, price 12s.,

THE HEBREW PEOPLE:

OR, THE HISTORY AND RELIGION OF THE ISRAELITES, FROM THE ORIGIN OF THE NATION TO THE TIME OF CHRIST: DEDUCED FROM THE WRITINGS OF MOSES AND OTHER INSPIRED AUTHORS, COPIOUSLY ILLUSTRATED AND CONFIRMED BY THE ANCIENT RECORDS, TRADITIONS, AND MYTHOLOGY OF THE HEATHEN WORLD.

SACRED ANNALS:

VOL. III.

Also complete in itself, handsomely bound in Cambric, in Two Parts, price 12s.,

THE GENTILE NATIONS:

OR, THE HISTORY AND RELIGION OF THE EGYPTIANS, ASSYRIANS, BABYLONIANS, MEDES, PERSIANS, GREEKS, AND ROMANS, COLLECTED FROM ANCIENT AUTHORS AND HOLY SCRIPTURE, AND INCLUDING THE RECENT DISCOVERIES IN EGYPTIAN, PERSIAN, AND ASSYRIAN INSCRIPTIONS: FORMING A COMPLETE CONNEXION OF SACRED AND PROFANE HISTORY, AND SHOWING THE FULFILMENT OF SACRED PROPHECY.

In One Volume, crown 8vo., price 7s. 6d., in Cambric, Second Edition, enlarged and improved,

RELIGION OF ANCIENT BRITAIN HISTORICALLY CONSIDERED:

OR,

A SUCCINCT ACCOUNT OF THE SEVERAL RELIGIOUS SYSTEMS WHICH HAVE OBTAINED IN THIS ISLAND FROM THE EARLIEST TIMES TO THE NORMAN CONQUEST.

WORKS BY THE SAME AUTHOR.

Just Published, in crown 8vo, bound in Cambric, price Three Shillings,

THE CASSITERIDES:

AN INQUIRY INTO THE

COMMERCIAL OPERATIONS OF THE PHŒNICIANS IN WESTERN EUROPE,

WITH PARTICULAR REFERENCE TO

THE BRITISH TIN TRADE.

Their numerous fleets were scattered over the Indian and Atlantic Ocean, and the Tyrian pennant waved at the same time on the coasts of Britain and the shores of Ceylon. HEEREN.

LONDON: LONGMAN, GREEN, LONGMAN, AND ROBERTS.

Lately published,
In One Volume, crown 8vo., price 7s. 6d., in Cambric,

THE HARMONY OF THE DIVINE DISPENSATIONS:

BEING A SERIES OF DISCOURSES ON SELECT PORTIONS OF HOLY SCRIPTURE, DESIGNED TO SHOW THE SPIRITUALITY, EFFICACY, AND HARMONY OF THE DIVINE REVELATIONS MADE TO MANKIND FROM THE BEGINNING, WITH NOTES, CRITICAL, HISTORICAL, AND EXPLANATORY.

In One Volume, crown 8vo., price 3s., in Cambric,

THE DOCTRINE OF THE CHERUBIM:

BEING AN INQUIRY, CRITICAL, EXEGETICAL, AND PRACTICAL, INTO THE SYMBOLICAL CHARACTER AND DESIGN OF THE CHERUBIC FIGURES OF HOLY SCRIPTURE.

In One Volume, crown 8vo., bound in Cambric, Fourth Edition, price 5s.,

THE WESLEYAN LOCAL PREACHERS' MANUAL:

BEING A SERIES OF LECTURES ON BIBLICAL SCIENCE, THEOLOGY, CHURCH HISTORY, &c., &c., DESIGNED FOR THE USE OF LAY PREACHERS, AND ADAPTED TO SUNDAY-SCHOOL TEACHERS AND CHRISTIAN STUDENTS.

LONDON:—PRINTED BY WILLIAM NICHOLS, 46, HOXTON SQUARE.

66662
287.1
Sm 57
v. 1
Smith, George
History of Wesleyan
Methodism.
JAN 8 '48
D. LITTMAN, BOOKSELLER
JUL 31 '52
OCT 15 '52
287.1
Sm57
1
66662